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The Trace of An Affective Object Encounter: a picture postcard, its provocations, and processual becomings

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The Trace of An Affective Object Encounter:

a picture postcard, its provocations, and processual becomings

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by

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Thesis Certification

CERTIFICATION

I, Louise Boscacci, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Louise J. Boscacci
24 April 2016

Abstract

This thesis of practice-based research begins with a first encounter: the affective provocation of a one hundred year-old pictorial postcard. It draws on a Spinozan-Deleuzian philosophical trajectory of contemporary affect theory in which affect is posited as the generative forces of encounter and the durational passage of those intensities and energies within a vocabulary of *becomings*. The travelling postcard, named within the project, 'the Round Table postcard', is housed in an intergenerational, familial archive in the Queensland tropics: an emplaced material object, and an electric encounter situated in idiolocal country of embodied attunement and connection. The thesis traces the postcard encounter and its becomings as *an affective trace*, and explores and develops this as a generative modality of creative-critical research and composition.

Embedded within the thesis is a reflective inquiry that engages with affect theory and scholarship. Focus is given to the intersectional potential of affective objects, atmospheres and energies of encounter in the thinking-making-doing of practice. The thesis teases out and articulates a connecting thread of scholarly and poetic response throughout the trace in terms of *affective emplacement*, *synsensorial provocation* and *ecological discontent.* Compositions involve works in ceramics, photomedia, sound, digital video, and cross-media exhibitions of these as *ensemblages*. Innovative works developed in the nexus of the translucent materiality of porcelain, LED illumination and photographic ceramic printing draw on and respond to the photographic archive that hosts the surviving postcard. Research and public gallery exhibitions composed from the exploratory oeuvre of the trace are described and reflected on. Explicit connection is made between the affective and the ecological in the context of a localised Anthropocene to suggest a new modality: the *shadows trace*. This *eco-affective* trajectory leads to a case study composition of *a shadow toponymy*. The postcard provocations set in motion an energetic tracery through which the concept of *after-affect* is proposed and explored as a becoming of an unfinished, lingering affective encounter.

Throughout, the thesis returns to the moments when affect as virtual, transitory yet powerfully generative energy of attunement meets a materially fragile, ephemeral, century-old picture postcard. From the initial material-immaterial provocation, a principal of becoming as an emergent refrain of encounter is heard: a recursive, a-bodied rhythm articulated as *pulse_pause*. This realisation of the trace vitally informs the compositions of

material practice. Final speculations point to the potential of the affective trace as a rich modality of research and practice in the meeting spaces of affect, ecology and contemporary ethico-aesthetics. It is modality that begins and travels—processually and transversally—with encounter, object and movement.

Keywords:
affective encounter, material practice, affective trace, objects and affect, Spinozan-Deleuzian affect, emplacement, shadow places, shadows trace, materiality-immateriality, porcelain-light-photography, sound, the archive, Derridean archive, aesthetics of the refrain, ecology and affect, situated practice-research, contemporary (visual) art

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An Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) from the University of Wollongong supported my full time research tenure. Thank you. A New Work Grant (Visual Arts) from the Australia Council for the Arts (2013–2015) made possible the start of conversations between clay, sound and encounter in eco-remnants of affect; this crucial studio support and focused time for research and development is deeply appreciated. The funded work continues.

Steven Mottram, electrical troubleshooter extraordinaire and friend, generously worked with me to design and resolve lighting techniques for illuminated gallery works and a portable solar unit. Thank you Brett Stone and Rex Irwin, gallery directors of the former Rex Irwin Art Gallery, Sydney. The importance of commercial galleries in the support of individual artists and practices is chronically underestimated in the wider ecology of the arts. I value the intense decade of collaborative working and exhibition-making that preceded this doctoral research venture.

I write as a foretaste of autumnal cool is arriving in the Illawarra highlands. The dry tropical places of this research account still in the embrace of a late wet season are another experiential realm altogether. I am indebted to Townsville elders and research collaborators Mary E. Boscacci, my mother, and Joan M. Ruffle (1928 – 2013), my aunt. Without their individual and co-operative investment in uncovering and sharing oral history, intergenerational material traces and objects of meaning, this project would have been impossible. Finally, I thank Gaye Tannous and CC for their encouragement, love and support at crossroad moments in my PhD process. Hey and you: Anne Maria Boscacci, sister, artist (1958 – 2015).

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Figure 1. With postcard in hand.

Chapter One

Introduction

> One might say that artists are a dangerous and greedy species because they want to somehow, somewhere capture and stop the fleeting poetic moment that appears by chance and then immediately gives way to the everyday world (Lee 2004, p116).

> We are moved by things. And in being moved, we make things (Ahmed 2010, p33).

What can a body do? This was a question posed by philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1990, p226), reanimating and composing anew from Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza's radical treatise of 1677, the 'Ethics'.[1] In his theory of 'the affects' developed therein, Spinoza offered these premises:

> All bodies are either in motion or rest (Part II, Axiom I; Spinoza 1883 [1677]).

And:

> Every body is moved sometimes more slowly, sometimes more quickly (Part II, Axiom II; Spinoza 1883 [1677]).

As Deleuze and Guattari put these ideas three centuries later in 'Memories of a Spinozist, II': 'Nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds. The credit goes to Spinoza for calling attention to these two dimensions of the Body … (1987, p260).

But more so, they decide:

> To every relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness grouping together an infinity of parts, there corresponds a degree of power. *To the relations composing, decomposing, or modifying an individual there correspond intensities that affect it, augmenting or diminishing its power to act*: these intensities come from external parts or from an individual's own parts (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p256; emphasis added).

[1] 'Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order' (*Ethica, ordine geometrico demonstrata*): Cook (2007).

In a line of creative flight that connects with this revitalised Spinozist provocation, I have now come to ask: *What does an object do, and undo? What might a movement become?*

The passage of research and composition presented in this thesis began with the generative provocation of an object and a movement—a *pause* and a *pulse*, as this coupled modality came to articulate itself en route. The object was, more particularly, a material *image-object*, a vintage British Edwardian-era pictorial postcard (Figure 1). My titling of it as the 'Round Table postcard' emerged from one of the distinctive visual features carried by its fading imagery and worded handwritten message, elaborated in greater detail in Chapter Two. I encountered it laid out on a table for my viewing by my mother in a former-formative homeplace, the contemporary port city of Townsville, in Wulgurukaba Currumbilbarra country, North Queensland.[2] [3] At that moment of introduction, scant was known about the aging postcard, except that it had been sent from Ireland to my maternal grandmother, a lifelong resident of that port place, the same locale in which I stood in encounter.[4]

The *movement* was the autonomic, involuntary, electric jolt that pulsed through my body when I first saw that picture postcard, and reached out to pick it up and turn it over. Then, another shivery, internal, somatic rush amplified the first. In the seconds and minutes that followed, a bloom net of cognitive movement—of intellectual associations and connections, mind's eye visual recall and new questions—accompanied those autonomous corporeal sparkings.

1.1 The route of *affectus*/ *affectio*

This ostensibly fleeting postcard encounter, experienced as an intense, bodily, generative impingement, was the activator of the creative research trace unfolded in this thesis.

[2] Mary E. Boscacci (b. 1930)

[3] Currumbilbarra/ Gurrumbilbarra is the ancestral-contemporary country name of the *Wulgurukaba*, traditional Aboriginal owners of the land and sea region in which the city of Townsville exists. Parts of the contemporary city also occupy Bindal country: *Thul Garrie Waja* (Townsville City Council 2010).

[4] Mary Margaret O'Farrell (Ruffle) (1893 – 1983)

Why and how to approach this provocation as a catalyst of new research? As the makings of a central research question itself? As introduced via the Spinozan-Deleuzian philosophically-inflected concept of the body at rest and in affective intensities of movement and agency, it was to 'affect' and 'the affective' that I turned to begin to explore the multiple provocations of this postcard encounter.

The contemporary, energetic bloom of affect theory and scholarship across multiple disciplines and practices of the humanities and the arts over the course of the past decade, and more, has been coined 'the affective turn' by sociologist-poet-writer on affect and new materialism, Patricia Clough (Clough & Halley 2007). I review this spectrum to background my angle of approach in greater detail in Chapter Three. However, as theorists Melissa Gregg and Greg Seigworth (Gregg & Seigworth 2010, p5) succinctly articulate, the concept of affect 'has gradually accrued a sweeping assortment of philosophical/ psychological/ physiological underpinnings, critical vocabularies, and ontological pathways, and, thus, can be (and has been) turned toward all manner of political/ pragmatic/ performative ends'. In the wake, and still in the midst, of this unfolding 'bloom-space'[5] of inquiry, they distil two principal vectors of theory and entangled meanings of 'affect' and 'affective.' The first is that related to the emotions, and the categorical naming of human emotion states derived from the differential affects theory of psychologist Silvan Tomkins (Tomkins & Karon 1962; Sedgwick 2003). The second, as already introduced above, is that emerging from Deleuze's 'Spinozist ethology of bodily capacities' (Gregg & Seigworth 2010, p5). Deleuze's late twentieth century reinterpretations of Spinoza's 'Ethics' were made accessible to English language scholars by the philosopher-translator Brian Massumi (Deleuze & Guattari 1987; Massumi 2002; Cook 2007). Massumi's (2002, 2014) continuing oeuvre from his seminal 1995 paper 'The Autonomy of Affect', and credited with sparking a resurgence of interest in this strand of affect theory (Gregg & Seigworth (2010, p5), has been particularly salient to the unfolding of the passage of thinking-making articulated in this thesis. But, to briefly extend this introductory lens of Spinozan-Deleuzian affect, in order to be explicit about my angle of approach:

> [A]ffects are not feelings, they are becomings that go beyond those who live through them (they become other) (Deleuze 1995, p137 in Thrift 2008, p116).

[5] Gregg and Seigworth (2010, p9); 'bloom space' (Stewart 2010, p340).

As Clough articulates, Spinozan-Deleuzian 'affect refers generally to bodily capacities to affect and be affected or the augmentation and diminution of a body's capacity to act, to engage, and to connect, such that autoaffection is linked to the self-feeling of being alive—that is, aliveness or vitality' (Clough & Halley 2007, p2). Thus, in this trajectory, affect is understood not as sentiment or emotion states, but in terms of forces of encounter, intensities of impingements, and bodily capacities of enhancement or diminishment (Deleuze & Guattari 1987; Massumi 2002; Clough & Halley 2007).

However, contemporary concepts of affect are also entangled with the body and embodiment in other ways and with other emphases: with 'the somatic', the (poly) senses—with a key shift in focus to the proximal and interoperative modes of touch, hearing, smell, proprioception—and kinesis (the moving or enacting body) (Gregg & Seigworth 2010). For example, Thrift's 'non-representational theory' entangles Spinozan-Deleuzian affect, embodiment and sensation, into a notion of 'the push' (Thrift 2008, p182).

In this thesis, I propose that the Deleuzian philosophical trajectory of Spinoza's *affectus*/ *affectio* (Massumi, pxvi in Deleuze & Guattari 1987) opens out space for an artist-researcher to think about possible *becomings* in a creative or compositional pathway. This is a space in which an affective object encounter—such as the intense provocation of the Round Table postcard—might be traced in a language of processual passage, *doings and becomings*, fine-grained textures and haecceities of compositions. And subtended here is another line of creative-conceptual potential offered by Félix Guattari's contention that affect engenders ethico-aesthetic practices rather than scientism (Guattari 1995; Zepke & O'Sullivan 2010).[6]

As Gregg and Seigworth (2010, p13) observe, the 'relationality' of affect is its most shared theoretical thread. Their distilled articulation of affect as 'forces or forces of encounter' (2010, p2) is a reminder of this. But equally, as I ask the question 'What might an affective provocation become?' they point to the imperative to attend to both the '*impingement … as well as the passage* (and the duration of the passage) of forces and intensities' (2010, p1; emphasis added).

[6] Guattari is explicit that this is not an anti-Science perspective, but a rejection of a pseudo-scientific reductive logic of categorising pluralities of subjectivation (Guattari 1989, 1995).

1.2 Research Question: The Affective Provocation

What to make of the affectivity of this object_and_movement? As an artist-researcher, my aim is to investigate and trace the passage of this intense provocation as a creative-conceptual inquiry. The challenge of a compositional research pathway is to zoom in and unpick the impingement of this encounter, its generative threads of affect and its passage of becomings—of making-thinking and wording.

I was compelled to 'follow' and 'find' the hint of unknown potential intuited in the serendipitous event that flashed and bloomed, passed, and yet lingered, simmered and impelled its attending-to. The 'meta-work' of the postcard encountering, was indeed, my turn to contemporary affect theory and scholarship as a means to try to understand 'what happened': how to understand the unwilled, uncalled intensities, and the bloom space of potential irrevocably glimpsed, intuited, proffered. How to answer this intriguing push? And ultimately, how to compose a reply to the Round Table postcard and its place-and-time distant author.

The research presented in this thesis unfolded from these interlaced questions:

> What are the *doings, undoings* and potential *becomings* of this affective image-object encounter? Of this material postcard, the powerful, involuntary, a-bodied[7] movement of encounter, and the passage of its forces and intensities in creative provocation?
>
> In short: What did the postcard encounter do? What might it become?

The thesis lays out and documents the compositional pathway of the impingement and the creative and scholarly passage of research activated. I propose this as a processual passage of making-thinking and wording. I propose affective becomings as the creative-critical, material, emergent immaterial, and scholarly trajectories pushed, pulled and called to. That is, becomings as compositional outcomes—the new creative works and the scholarly traces and excavations triggered, and embraced, en route.

[7] After Massumi's (2014, p97) 'a-bodying'. Refer also to Chapter Two.

But vital composition, as Latour (2010) suggests, also carries and connotes its opposite, de-composition, and doings may equally be undoings as Judith Butler (2004) articulates. This affect-threaded inquiry attends to, and composes from, both doings and undoings en route. As a passage of interlaced making and thinking, I was interested in pursuing a modality of research that unfolds, rolls, folds back and bifurcates, in an investigative and imaginative trace becoming tracery. These are spaces where new questions emerge, where attention to chance, accident, serendipity and intuition is foregrounded and valorised as inherent to empirical curiosity in a passage of practice-fed, contemporary arts research.

To commence the research trace, I named the affective postcard encounter, 'postcard_*affectus*'—the subject of Chapter Two, where the encountering is unpicked and the first research trajectories are shaped. The emergent pathway of research and composition is progressively laid out in the individual thesis chapters, where accompanying, co-travelling research questions are also posed. New artworks created during the research passage are documented and discussed within the thesis. Exhibitions of new work ensembles during the project's duration are also documented and discussed. This means there is no additional, externally-sited exhibition that accompanies this integrated thesis. The Guide to Reading, below, provides an overview of each chapter and the thesis structure.

1.3 Other Angles of Arrival to Research: Introductory Background

The Movement of Practices

I arrived at the postcard encounter in a trajectory of art practice vitally informed by a former practice as a field ecologist and teaching biologist (for instance, Boscacci et al. 1987). Ecological practice, and its epistemological underpinnings of process, non-linear connectivity and systems thinking, has continued to influence and energise my creative approaches. A prevailing focus on relational place encountering, on emplacement and its ecological bellings testifies to this cross-conversation in making and thinking over time (Ballard 2009; Jones 2009; Chapter Two). And, given this interlacing, ecology and ecosophical perspectives also contribute to the unfolding compositional passage.

Nevertheless, I met the postcard as a fulltime practicing artist, working daily in a studio, with commercial and public gallery commitments, and rolling exhibition deadlines as the means of primary income. To date, I have worked principally with the materiality and

media of ceramics and photography, and the possibilities elicited at the intersection of these languages. Over the past eighteen years I have exhibited objects and vessels, mixed media assemblages, space-specific installations and photographic print series (Ballard 2006; Ballard 2009; Jones 2009). Over the past decade, a key focus of my ceramic studio has been to explore and elaborate a vocabulary of translucent porcelain and light in illuminated forms and assemblages. It is this nexus of long-lived, tangible and frangible materiality and the immaterial ephemerality of wave+particle light that had become a focus of innovation alongside the necessary prosaics of making (less esoteric) objects of trade. A more recent nexus of porcelain-light-photographic imagery seeded in the studio was drawn on in beginning to compose the affective response to the Round Table postcard (Chapter Four). Thus, the early stage of the research stepped off from this evolving material—tangible/ immaterial—ephemeral vocabulary. Accompanying studio and exhibition cycles has been a written oeuvre of practice presented in journal articles, symposia presentations and lectures, blogs, and the multiple spaces of an Australia Council London studio residency (Boscacci 1999, 2003, 2008a, 2010). As an artist-maker-researcher entering a dedicated time of new research, a rare sabbatical of exploration and risk, I also carried the question of potential unknowable in advance: What elaborations, bifurcations, or new flights of making-thinking-doing might be activated en route?

Relational Place: Encountering and Thinking

'A place is an event space', the sculptor and painter Lee Ufan (2004, p191) eloquently observed. Over the course of research-fed practice prior to this doctoral trace, I have explored relational place as a conceptual lens and as a field of encountering and artistic response. Place here was framed and understood *a priori* as a relational sphere, whereby emplacement convokes vital, embodied relations with an idiolocal(e)[8], and its provocations and teachings. This marks a distinction from place as a cartographic concept, or territory defined by locational existence and naming on a map, without eliding geographic situatedness (Casey 2009). Inherently, this past unfolding of praxis informed the compositional pathway activated by the Round Table postcard, and is fleshed out in Chapter Two. If my turn to Spinozan-Deleuzian affect in the present research was no less the powerful push of the postcard encounter, the becomings of its passage were also conditioned by a practice in sustained conversation with a spectrum of place discourse in the humanities and arts.

[8] After Casey (2009, p23): the 'idiolocal' is a 'somewhere' with 'concrete situatedness'.

Before turning to the focus of the postcard provocation and its trace, I want to briefly introduce two related angles of approach that position and clarify my research perspective. First, this challenge and invitation:

> You people try and dig little bit more deep, you bin digging only white soil (Kimberley elder and linguist Paddy Roe in Benterrak et al. 1984, p172).

Postcolonial historian Peter Read (2000, 2003) has argued that an underlying non-Indigenous anxiety about place belonging exists in contemporary Australia arising from the original British expropriation[9] of Indigenous homelands, and colonial settler histories of violent dispossession of local Aboriginal people already 'at home' on ancestral countries. He proposed, moving from a personal quest for belonging, that undertaking and articulating meaningful engagements over time with the places of personal connection, whatever and wherever they may be, is one route to restoring some legitimacy to contemporary settler Australian presence. This call for 'non-Aboriginal Australians' to seek 'deep relationship with country' has been contested by Gelder (2000) as tied to the 'fantasy of indigenizing the non-Aboriginal' as also 'native-born', and where the 'non' is removed and 'settlers become indigenous' but 'Aboriginal people remain Aboriginal'. Contemporary settler Australians living on dispossessed Aboriginal First Nations countries are still living on stolen homelands, Gelder (2000) knows, however much these have been inter-generationally 'loved' or protected from environmental degradation and threat: that, '[d]ispossession is in fact necessary in order for such belonging to occur'.

From my perspective as a *migaloo* (White Queenslander) artist-ecologist, whilst I strongly concur with Gelder's position, I do not engage in more depth with this topic in this thesis. I raise it here, in a general backgrounding of the research trace, as cultural placing of self, because I want to propose and explore a line of affect-generated thinking that travels through this thesis in full recognition that millennia of Indigenous cultural presence and place knowledges pre-exist and co-exist with my own conceptual and art-based interpretations.[10]

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[9] Langton (Langton & Palmer 2003; Langton 2010) refers to this as the eighteenth century British Annexation of Australia.

[10] Viewing the Aboriginal Australia Map (Horton 1994) eloquently reasserts this historical fact; a provocative reminder I have previously articulated as 'one person's view may be another's ancestral backyard' (Lally 2004, p1).

I propose that rather than *claiming or seeking* belonging, emplaced belonging might alternatively be understood as the a-bodied recognition of *being claimed* or *belonged by*—of being *affectively belonged by* a 'somewhere' or 'somewheres'; formative, exploratory home spaces of childhood being only one example. *Belonged-by* knowing is a form of affective knowledge. And 'affective' refers to the autonomic forces and intensities of particular idiolocales embodied and attuned-to, which—uncalled and unwilled—continue to provoke creatively and ethically in scope. I pick up and elaborate this becoming speculation, and the potential eco-ethical provocations of this acknowledgement in this thesis.

Secondly, in place discourse across multiple disciplines of the humanities and the arts, the phrase/ concept 'a sense of place' or 'the sense of place' has been a resilient refrain in the context of non-Indigenous expressions of idiolocal place connection, continuity and belonging (Lippard 1997; Plumwood 2008; Cranston 2009; Lappin 2014). The ecophilosopher Val Plumwood (2008) has uniquely questioned its uncritical use in a millennial trend towards homeplace 'dwelling' narratives and 'bland celebration' of a sense of place within the Australian enviro-humanities. Early in my ceramics practice, and its written articulations, I intentionally rejected this expression as problematic to a contemporary vocabulary of creative relational response, but had yet to unpick and articulate this affective niggle fully. Before I encountered Plumwood's resonant critique, a travelling question of practice was still carried in thought when I reached to pick up the Round Table postcard: What more than a 'sense of place'? What other critical and imaginative vocabularies relevant for 21st century emplaced experiences and enworldings were possible? In this thesis, I invoke Plumwood's (2008) challenge to *uncritical* sense of place and dwelling narratives in a contemporary age of ecological interconnectedness, and concretely emplace her concept of 'Shadow Places' to name the shadow places of the affective locale of the postcard encountering. If affect engenders ethico-aesthetic paradigms, as the philosopher Félix Guattari (1989, 1995) theorised, then I propose that this Shadow Places case study is where the affective and the ecological meet in the compositional pathway.

In the rolling, creative push of the postcard's provocation, I endorse and explore a conception of emplacement and belonging that ties the affective dimension to the ecological injunctions of 'belonging'. The thesis as a whole heads towards this proposition, where *affective emplacement, its synsensorial provocations and ecological discontents* are

connecting threads that emerge and wend their way into becoming in the aesthetics of encounter.

Why Affect?

My turn to contemporary affect theory and scholarship as key to shaping and informing the research modality is, no less, the affective 'meta-work' of the postcard encounter (Chapter Three). It imbricates the relational place encountering focus of preceding practice, introduced briefly above. As an artist-maker, the movement of encounter experienced was impossible to ignore (Chapter Two). It called to be listened to, heeded and followed as a seminal 'pedagogical' offering of unknown potential—and risk.

1.4 Overview of Studio Processes and Intersectional Writing

The empirical material exploration undertaken in the studio is inherent to the larger compositional pathway. Beginning from a desire to expand my existing material and media vocabulary of practice, the project evolved, and new materials entered as they found a 'right fit' in the compositional response. Sound, in particular, has been explored. Nevertheless, the materiality of clay bodies, moving from fragile paper-porcelain to solid resonant stoneware according to the push and pull of languages evoked, comprises a substantial material and studio investigation. As implied by the phrase 'making-thinking', materiality, process and thought are entangled elements of the synergistic movement of provocation and potential. Individual chapters present more detail on materiality and studio processes as relevant.

This project emerged in the continuum of my full-time arts practice—one introduced as an interlacing of making-thinking-doing or 'research-fed practice'. It began with a small materially ephemeral object and its power of affective movement, both of which, as an encounter event, became impossible to ignore. It was sparked, not from inside an existing theoretical framework or single discourse, but by an electric moment. However, valorising this ultimate evanescence as a core question of higher degree research—rather than leaving it located solely in the studio as a practitioner—was engendered by the intuited potential of exploring it as a creative, material investigation in tandem and cross-conversation with a reflective scholarly trace that might help inform the encounter and its questions. Almost a decade ago, Carol Gray (2006, p1) argued that, 'inquiring through creative practice is a legitimate form of research, leading to different ways of knowing from the dominant academic kind characterised by reason and logic, that champions theory as the primary

means of generating new knowledge'. She asked the question: 'How can we understand the creative arts—in this instance art and design—as a form of research towards similarly valuable but different ways of knowing?' Her answer warrants reiteration here:

> If the artist declares an intentional inquiry at the outset—a new kind of 'manifesto', explores and tests new creative forms and practices, and takes initial responsibility for the critical reflection, analysis and communication of that inquiry then I understand this is 'production as research', and the artwork—probably as a corpus of work, not a single artefact/product—can embody and communicate the research insights through a variety of visual and material evidence as in the 'thesis as argument' concept. We move from exhibition to exposition—from obfuscation to revelation, and the sharing of new understandings from the inquiry (Gray 2006, p12).

Similarly, Paul Carter's (2004) seminal work on 'material thinking' cogently recast creative practice as research, and explored how types of research practices in the plastic and visual arts, in particular, might be conceptualised and theorised. In broad terms, the intentionally processual research undertaken in this thesis acknowledges and contributes to the valorisation and inventive potential of practice-led research—in this instance, drawing on the materialities and media of clay, photography and sound and the vital influence of ecological thought.

However, at the more 'local' intersection of affect and creative research, it also meets Massumi's (2002, p66) resonant proposition that 'passage precedes position', which, in turn, was inspired by the oeuvre of the philosopher of movement and duration, Henri Bergson (Massumi 2002, pp5–8). How can one know the becomings—the 'findings'—of a passage in advance? Beginning with the provocation of an object and movement, this thesis explores the creative-critical passage as a modality of generative research. I am interested in its potential for expanding, enriching and engendering new vocabularies of response, investigation and imagination where affective energies of idiolocal emplacement, objects and encounters meet and synergise anew. By 'vocabularies', I include material, immaterial and lexical, and adopt multiple modes of writing, speaking and reflecting. Connate to the creative enquiry was finding the 'right fit' words and terminology to articulate often

ineffable experience, 'feeling-tones',[11] transient and ephemeral affective intensities, forces and synergies of provocation and activation.

As Lykke et al. (2014, p2) observe:

> We consider writing as something that is not separate from, but totally embedded in, the research process. We share Richardson's claim that the struggle with language—with naming processes, with problems of representing and engaging with 'objects' of study, with questions of enunciation (from which position do you tell your text? Is there a visible 'I' or 'we' in the text or not?), with the narrative and aesthetic structure of the text—is part of the scholarly enquiry.

Stemming from this intention—reaching for the 'right fit' in words and wordings—several modes of writing are interlaced throughout the thesis in addition to normative academic explication. These include: extracts from previous ecological field journals; diaries of research trips to Townsville composed during this project; passages of thought uncensored by the imperative for unambiguous communication—those that arrive in the pre-dawn twilight or when walking freely, in corporeal-cognitive connected flow; short essay forms; and other prose pieces that also emerge from the material process of forming large clay bowls using the vocabulary and tacit knowledge of the body working with fluid matter and a wheel.

In the life of scholarly inquiry, philosopher Judith Butler (2014b) speaks of the injunction to continually seek to 'expand the realm of the possible': of seeking out and exploring *creative and critical possibilities* of situated knowledge. But this imperative of vital curiosity is equally relevant to material and process-rich art practice in a research setting, whether that is created in the context of an independent artist's studio or the academy. I suggest that a crucial role of the artist-researcher-scholar is to ask 'What if?' and to follow hunch, intuition, affective energies, and the possibly risky 'unknown'. At heart, this is the premise of this research, and its justification.

[11] Gregg & Seigworth (2010, p2).

1.5 Guide to Reading with Chapter Summary

The thesis is of necessity linear, yet embedded within it are bifurcations, and further buried are compositional repetitions. It comprises the chapters and the Thesis Portfolio, a digital support folio of visual slideshows, sound and video files referred to chapters four, five and six. It is presented in compilation on a USB, which is designed to be accessed when individual support files are referred to in the text. As such, there is no final exhibition to be walked into, but the studio investigations, compositions and exhibitions of the research project are interwoven and documented through the thesis document. Consider this approach analogous to the field researcher who goes out to a location and in coming back sets out to communicate the course of travel and their findings. In writing my research account in response to the push and call of the postcard encounter, I adopt a shifting voice across chapters: exegetical, critical review, as a studio practitioner engaged with making, materials and media, as a practitioner in the field, as a returnee (unfinished) inquirer to a connected encounter-event, and in reflective voice.

The written thesis is comprised of two main parts, PART A and PART B. A final CODA follows Part B and concludes the written account of the research.

PART A of the thesis comprises Chapters Two to Seven.

Chapter Two: Postcard_*affectus*

'Postcard_*affectus*' presents an analysis of the affective dimensions of the Round Table postcard encounter. The chapter considers, and begins to unpick, this creative triggering, asking the questions 'What did it do?' and 'What might it become?'. A body of primary research is summarised and helps to identify the origins of the one hundred year old picture postcard ('Life History of the Round Table Postcard'). Initial trajectories of research are introduced. I introduce the idea and wording of 'affective place', and the synsensorial encounter. This results in an emergent, connecting theme of the expanded trace as affective emplacement, synsensorial provocation and ecological discontent.

Chapter Three: Of Affect

My deepening turn to contemporary affect theory and scholarship was one of the first outcomes of the Round Table postcard encountering. Chapter Three presents a scoping review of contemporary literature, with focus on the Spinozan-Deleuzian trajectory of affect

studies that shaped the modality of approach adopted in and infusing this research trace. The second half of this literature review presents the trajectory of my thinking and inquiry around the affectivity of objects and atmospheres in encounter that came to inform my analysis of postcard_*affectus*. As a work of review and scholarship, the chapter is itself also one compositional becoming of the research passage.

Chapter Four: To the Archive

One of the first moves from the postcard itself was to its revealed holding place, a private, familial archive of historical and vintage photographs, photocards, and other collected idiolocal ephemera (I refer to this as 'the Archive at #75'). The in-place to studio processes and the conceptual underpinnings of working with this collection to compose a body of illuminated photographic porcelain works (*lightenings*) is presented and discussed in Chapter Four. Pulled back out during archive sessions into the *affective sysensorium* of the first 'archive' of a-bodied attunement—the outer holding of affective place—new media were added to my existing vocabulary of wit(h)ness and response: sound and digital video passages were collected as idiolocal, ephemeral haecceities of affective push and pull, listening and wit(h)ness during this new return encountering. This chapter presents the passage of archive work, new encounterings, studio experimentation and production, and the scholarly traces intertwined with this cycle of making-thinking. Insights from Derrida's notion of the archive (Derrida 1998), the concept of affective atmospheres (Anderson 2009), and the actual-experiential and ideational provocations of Twilight as a transient temporal zone (Huyssen 1995) are explored. I introduce the emergence of the *porcelain photoshard* as part of an expanding ceramic vocabulary. Included in this chapter is documentation and discussion of *Archive Place (Twilight),* 2012, a research exhibition developed from this first passage of movement and composition.

Chapter Five: In the Riverbowl … And its Leavings

In The Riverbowl

Chapter Five has two sections. In the first, 'affective place' becomes 'belonged-by place'. Returning to the affective synsensorium of the old homing spaces of the riverscape and plains of Currumbilbarra-Townsville engendered a return to whole-bodied making with plastic, moving clay on a turning wheel. This 'download' of affective, a-bodied energies accrued over new encounterings produced a new series of five large scale ceramic bowl forms, created over six months in 2013. They are the largest ceramic forms resolved in two

decades of studio practice. As *forms of affective emplacement*, these river bowls are crystalline, resonant stillings of movement in long-lived, if frangible, materiality. They also carry, embedded within their fired clay bodies, local alluvial clays collected from the tenuously connected remnant wetlands in the local river lands of the contemporary city. This series, as material processualism, experiment and an expanded form of a-bodied response—as new objects of affect—is documented and discussed.

… And its Leavings

Leaving the riverbowl of the affective archive place at the end of research trips was always by air. Serendipitously, flights south variously closely tracked the coastline of the spreading city, its riverscape and edgelands. I began to digitally photograph the moving visual trajectory laid out below, and later in the studio, investigated this familiar country and rapidly expanding city in enlarged computer screen images. This second half of Chapter Five describes the emergence of *the digital photoshard* from the exploratory process that unfolded. The end of the chapter introduces the digital and print photographic series *Becoming Shard Country*, 2012–2014.

Chapter Six: Seeking the Shadow Places

Chapter Six directly encounters the ecological claims and injunctions of affectively attuned emplacement—of 'affective place' and 'belonged-by place'—and asks how it is best to creatively respond. In this chapter, 'affective place' begins to meet its ecological and material shadows via the recent ecosophical concept of Shadow Places (Plumwood 2008). I present a two-year case study (2011–2013) undertaken via the port of Townsville to begin to disclose and name shadow places for this locale: the same port of arrival of Ellen Carroll; the same port of arrival of the Round Table postcard; and the same contemporary port I had been flying over and witnessing in return departures. A shadow toponymy—a collection of shadow place names—is composed. The exhibition ensemblage *Pulse-Pause 2013* (2013) was a creative rendition of this investigation. Embedded in the chapter is a tracing of the terminology of 'sense of place' to the ancient 'Genius Loci'. At the chapter's end, I discuss an expanded ethics of emplacement and 'belonging' in which affective emplacement is irrevocably interconnected with critical ecological consciousness: 'affective place' and its 'shadow places'.

Chapter Seven: ***Pulse_Pause*****: what becomes in refrain**

What does an object do, and undo? What might an a-bodied movement become? This passage of research from material, paused postcard of hand and eye, and its affective a-bodied provocations, unwilled and unbiddable in encountering, reveals another becoming: a repeating rhythm, an emergent, virtual refrain of postcard_*affectus* and the activated compositional passage laid out in this thesis as: *pulse_pause*. In Chapter Seven, I approach this immaterial, connecting, rolling, repeating beat with reference to Guattari's (1995) affect-entangled ethico-aesthetic of the 'refrain'. I speculate on its potential as a generative modality in my own (expanding) research-practice, and in transversal pedagogical contexts and projects.

PART B of the thesis is Chapter Eight. This chapter was also engendered by the postcard encounter and the unfolding research pathway. In turn, it influenced and is interlaced with the affective trace presented in Part A, but as a trace-within-the-trace, it is presented as a stand-alone composition. As stressed, a processual modality bifurcates and presents possible trajectories to be followed, or not. This was one bifurcation that vigorously impelled its following.

Chapter Eight: **After-Affect Skin Songs: rewriting affective dimensions of mammal species loss**

Chapter Eight, 'After-Affect Skin Songs', is a related, stand-alone work that describes a seminal event as an ecologist thirty years ago, elicited and experientially reanimated during the course of this research, and revisited through an analytical lens of affect. As such, it is also a compositional becoming of postcard_*affectus*, created by listening to, following, and allowing its unexpected emergence to enter the unfolding passage sparked by the Round Table postcard questions. It introduces a new concept of 'after-affect', the renewed creative-intellectual movement of recalled, embodied provocation over time. This is the unfinished busyness of affectivity as an episodic becoming—a return and rescoring of an affective encounter's doings and undoings. A shorter paper from this chapter of the same title was presented at the conference 'Affective Habitus: New Environmental Histories of Zoology, Botany, Zoology and the Emotions', June 19–21, 2014 (ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 2014). The chapter was engendered much earlier in my registering of the postcard encounter's provocations, was influenced by and in turn influenced and elaborated my thinking about affect's synergistic and syn-thetic workings within the larger unfolding research. It supports and extends this doctoral submission.

CODA: Encounter and trace in an affective ecology of practice

This final movement reflects on the passage of the postcard encounter laid out in the chapters of the thesis, and concludes by thinking about the potential of the affective trace as a generative mode for practice-scholarship engaged with the aesthetics of encounter.

In addition to the chapters and the digital Thesis Portfolio are a number of Appendices. Appendix A itemises and documents the works presented in the Thesis Portfolio. It also lists the exhibitions staged and participated in as part of the research project, and which are referred to in the chapters of the thesis. Appendices B, C, D and E embed layers of research discussed in Chapters Two and Four. Consider them 'hyperlinks' to drop into when they are referred to in the chapter accounts. Appendix B collates a body of primary visual and historical research undertaken in order to date and type the Round Table postcard. Appendix C is a short text derived from archival research and intergenerational lore that fleshes out the context of the arrival of Ellen Carroll who is key to the subsequent arrival of the Round Table postcard in north Queensland. Appendix D is a literature review on the topic of the archive and contemporary art; it is pertinent to Chapter Four. Appendix E describes the Solar Trunk, a portable solar power unit developed and used in exhibitions during the research project.

Figure 2.1. The Round Table postcard, recto.
Valentine & Sons pictorial postcard, 13.9 x 8.8 cm, undated, *circa* 1901–1910.

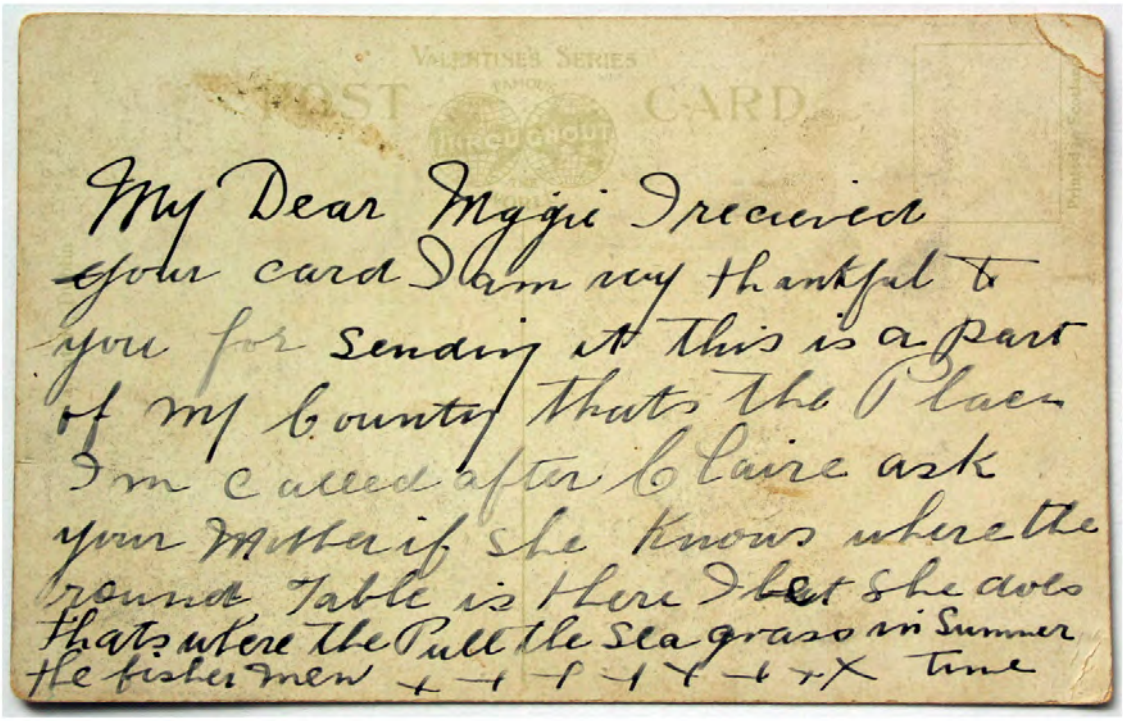

Figure 2.2. The Round Table postcard, verso.
Valentine & Sons pictorial postcard, 13.9 x 8.8 cm, undated, *circa* 1901–1910.

Chapter Two

Postcard_*affectus*

> To be affected by something is to evaluate that thing. Evaluations are expressed in how bodies turn toward things. To give value to things is to shape what is near us (Ahmed 2010, p31).

2.1 The Encounter

The provocateur was a vintage, coloured picture postcard depicting a vista of a spectacular, receding line of sea cliffs and a viewing, seaward-gesturing couple at the edge of a high rock platform (Figure 2.1). In the foreground, incompletely included in the frame, was what appeared to be a large round table with seats. The postcard had been in my maternal family's private archive of photographs, photocards and other collected ephemera for at least a century, I later established. I had never seen it before, and knew nothing about it.

It was the image of Cliffs that caught me first. An intense electric jolt travelled my body. This fleeting, intense experience was one of momentarily glimpsing a doppelganger that quickly discloses its illusion: a momentary recognition that becomes a mistaken identity; a known to an unknown in a flash. What was I looking at? Were these the Australian Nullarbor Cliffs? They looked so familiar yet were not the same, could not be … too green, and yet ... so, where were these? What were these? Who chose an image of Nullarbor-like cliffs to send? Surprise, recognition, uncertainty, and intrigue proceeded in a cascading, internal flow. I reached out and picked up the card from the table to look more closely. The Cliffs were identified in the printed caption: clearly not the cliff lines of the western Nullarbor I had known so well as a working ecologist, but the Cliffs of Moher on the western Atlantic coast of County Clare, Ireland.

Hand to hand, I turned this old, fragile postcard over (Figure 2.2). Verso, a fading, spidery handwritten message with idiosyncratic punctuation looped across most of the blank space:

My Dear Maggie I received
your card I am very thankful to
you for sending it this is a part

of my County that's the Place
I am called after Claire ask
your Mother if she knows where the
round Table is there I bet she does
thats where the[y] pull the sea grass in summer
the fishermen x x x x x x x time

As I deciphered the handwriting, there again, triggered by the precise wording of the communication, was another involuntary bodily shiver, a prickling of goose bumps and a cognitive flow of connecting thoughts and questions:

> This is a part of my County. That's the Place I am called after: Claire [Clare].
> Ask your mother if she knows where the round Table is there. I bet she does.

The words were to my reading an explicit articulation of local and particular emplacement and belonging, a chiming echo of the theme of relational place, rendered in eloquent simplicity. Moreover, the card also expressed an affirmation of the unbroken emplaced belonging of a distant, absent insider—a great-grandmother ['your mother'], it was quickly revealed, who had emigrated to Currumbilbarra country in northern Queensland and was unlikely ever to return to the Cliffs or 'round Table' of this postcard's picturing and evocation.

In a serendipitous meeting, here was an electric assemblage of affect: a fragile, two-sided picture postal card in my hand, intense and involuntary somatic pulses of movement, the triggering of a cognitive bloom net of visual memory, place connection, and the chiming echo of a thematic focus foremost in my trajectory of creative practice: relational place, articulations of idiolocal emplacement (embodied placement), and questions and nuances of situated belonging. Curious about the specific attention drawn to the presence of the table as a particular haecceity of connection on the Cliffs (one of suggestive significance only alluded to by the correspondent), I instinctively called this postcard the 'Round Table postcard'.

I have named this affective object encounter 'postcard_*affectus*', alluding to the Spinozan-Deleuzian conception of *affectus*/ *affectio* and the creative research modality proposed throughout this thesis. How to approach and unpick this intense encounter event? How to

understand the forces and nuances of the impingement, its generative push and intuited potential? My resolution was to include both the object and the bodily impingement I experienced: to explore the postcard as an image-object, and to unpick the a-bodied encounter as co-poietic in affect's generous work of triggering, seeding, and opening out anew.[1] The questions remained. What did it do; undo? What might it become? Ahmed (2010) points to a pathway of creative interpretation that includes not only the object in encounter, but also the idea of 'conditions of arrival':

> An object can be affective by virtue of its location … and the timing of its appearance. To experience an object as being affective or sensational is to be directed not only toward an object, but to 'whatever' is around that object, which includes what is behind the object, the conditions of its arrival (Ahmed 2010, p33).

This insight is a cue to embrace, as Ahmed (2010, p37) also articulates it, 'the angle of our arrival' to an affective event, an object, a moment, the atmosphere of a space. The Round Table postcard was met within a still-moving trajectory from ecological practice to arts-based practice, and their continuing intersection and synergies: from an ecological practice—with its fielded places and ecological spaces of thought—to one of studio-intensive materiality and object making. Both these 'angles of arrival' contribute to my interpretation of postcard_*affectus*.

Objects and their affective doings are material entities with histories of making, handled movements and use, they carry stories known and hidden, and all worlded objects come to pause in a situated place—a 'somewhere'. One other crucial condition of arrival was at work as an amplifier of the volume and modulator of the affectual nuances of this experience: the situatedness of the encounter in the sphere of a former, formative 'home place'—an affectively powerful, relational place—which has also been a place of attuned focus in creative practice over time. With a refocus on the dimension of the affectivity of relational place sparked by postcard_*affectus*, I came to name this as an 'affective place': a (first), formative, embodied, attuned-to, still-active, idiolocal place of affective intensities and forces.

[1] 'Co-poietic', after Ettinger (2004, 2006b).

In unpicking postcard_*affectus*, I begin with three intertwined threads of the provocation to explore the intensity of this encountering as a generative spark, and point to trajectories taken in the continuing research passage:

1. The Round Table picture postcard itself: this fragile, materially ephemeral *image-object* as an affective trigger—an '*affective image-object*'.

2. The intense a-bodied, involuntary, autonomic force of the impingement experience—and its teachings.

3. From both the card and the situated happenstance of its meeting, the evocation of a thematic thread of relational place, positive emplacement and embodied attunement refocused and named here in terms of 'Affective Place' and affective emplacement.

2.2 The Round Table Postcard

2.2.1 Life History of the Round Table Postcard

At the time I met it, scant was known about the Round Table postcard. Family lore orally recorded who had penned, but it was unsigned. The date it was sent or received was obscure because it was also undated. Consequently, substantive research was undertaken to attempt to illuminate the life history of the postcard. As much first-hand family lore pertaining to the postcard and its passage of keeping up until the moment of encounter was gleaned by consulting elder family members; this 'personal communication' was achieved as part of collaborative genealogical research with Mary E. Boscacci, in whose archival collection the postcard was tended. Online institutional collections and archives of historical ephemera, picture postcards, and photography were accessed to attempt to date it. This research trace also revealed more about the postcard's publishers, and its origins and sociocultural context as a material-visual postal object.

A collation of the primary research disclosing the 'life history' of the postcard is given as an abridged account in the text insert *Disclosing the Life History of the Round Table Postcard,* below. The body of visual and dating research is presented in full in 'Dating the Round Table Postcard' (Appendix B). In brief, this Valentines & Sons coloured collotype postal

card can be feasibly dated to the period 1900–1910, the British Edwardian era (O'Neill & Hatt 2010). It was sent to my maternal grandmother, Mary Margaret O'Farrell ('Maggie') in Townsville, North Queensland, by her Irish aunt Haniora (Norrie) Clair living in her family village of Liscannor, County Clare, Ireland. Norrie Clair refers to Maggie's mother, Ellen Carroll O'Farrell, her older sister, who emigrated from Liscannor to the Queensland colonial port township of Townsville, in Wulgurukaba Currumbilbarra country, in 1875. The Round Table postcard followed Ellen into the same tropical port some thirty years after her passage and arrival by immigrant ship from Clare at twenty years of age (see 'Ellen Carroll's Angle of Arrival 1875': Appendix C).

The dramatic Cliffs of Moher depicted are situated on the Atlantic coast of west Clare, close to the Carroll sisters' village, six kilometres away to the southeast, on Liscannor Bay. The round table was one of the amenities built on the Cliffs by the land estate owner Cornelius O'Brien (Lewis 1837/1995). Written testimony records it being in place on the Cliffs in 1854, along with a nearby viewing tower ('O'Briens Tower'), pathways and stables for 'the accommodation of visitors to this bold and iron-clad coast' (Comber n.d.; Clare County Library 2011). The table, with its encircling bench seating was framed in iron and topped by locally mined Liscannor slate. It was a stone round table with its metal framing firmly embedded into the rock platform on the Cliff's edge.

Disclosing the Life History of the Round Table Postcard

The Valentine Series picture postcard was sent to my maternal grandmother Mary Margaret O'Farrell (Ruffle) when she was a teenager or young unmarried woman living in the family home, Sturt Street, West Townsville, Queensland. Together with its companion Irish postcard, it was held in her mother Ellen Carroll O'Farrell's cache of family documents and photographs in a small wooden box in Ellen's final home at Livingstone Street, West End, Townsville.

Ellen Carroll, my maternal great-grandmother, had emigrated to Townsville from the village of Liscannor, County Clare, Ireland in 1875. She was twenty years old, and accompanied by her nineteen-year old younger sister Maria Carroll (Appendix C).

After Ellen's death in 1946, her daughter Maria (Molly) O'Farrell lived on in the house, until her death in 1977. The remaining small personal archive was then sent down to my grandmother's home in Shaw Street (a street away) where later, following her death in 1983, the box and its contents were acquired by an uncle Lewis Ruffle's family when he was given the piece of furniture—the wooden lowboy—in which it had been kept (M. E. Boscacci pers. comm., April – July 2011; November 2012; 20 August 2014). My mother, Mary E. Boscacci, researching her O'Farrell family history in the mid-2000s, was shown the box collection for the first time, and recovered the pair of postcards. In turn, she introduced me to them in a simply staged presentation of these on a table in her house: the makings of the affective Round Table postcard encounter of this thesis.

The postcard was left undated by the writer, Haniora (Norrie) Clair, Ellen's sister who had remained in the family village of Liscannor, County Clare, Ireland. It carries no postal marking, which suggests it was dispatched in a separate envelope or perhaps boxed with other items. There is no family record or living knowledge about its date of arrival, nor any stories about it and its companion postcard sent by her young teenage daughter Kate Clair of Liscannor to her aunt Ellen in northern Queensland.

Kate Clair writes she is sending her postcard and a ‘box of [word missing from damage] and two papers’, so these two postcards may have travelled together from Clare.

A high-resolution digitised scan of the postcard was systematically examined to detect and check visual and material details not fully discernible to the unaided eye. Recto, the viewing couple appears to be dressed in Late Victorian (1890–1900) or early Edwardian period (1901–1910) European attire (O’Neill & Hatt 2010). Further pictorial research via the Edwardian photographs of Edward Linley Sambourne taken between 1905 and 1908 (Walker 2013) suggests an Edwardian era dating; in particular, his London street style series of 1906 (Walker 2012) captured women’s dress and hat styles suggestive of that worn by the cliff edge woman.

In order to more precisely date the postcard, searches were made for similar ‘Cliffs of Moher’ postcards and photographs in the digitised, online collections of Irish and British libraries and museums (Appendix B). Research typed it as a colour-tinted collotype, a mass-produced, popular format developed by the Valentine & Sons of Scotland (University of St Andrews 2012). Initial focus was given to the Valentine & Sons series of pictorial postcards in these institutional collections of ephemera, but this was widened to also include photographic collections from diverse sources, and extended to searching online vintage postcard collector websites.

In summary, the recorded date range for comparable postcards and photographs in these collections spanned the period 1890–1920. No exact match for this Valentine postcard was located, and in the end, no precise year can be attributed. However, close examination of available records suggests that a date range of 1900–1910 is most likely. A feasible date of no later than 1910 is strongly indicated.

This places the picture postcard within the British Edwardian era (1901–1910), rather than Late Victorian (1890–1901). Undeniably, the date of writing and dispatch by Norrie Clair may have been later than circa 1910, but this date accords with the age of my teenage grandmother who was 17 years old in 1910.

Serendipitously, I located her own ‘Post Card Album’ compiled between 1908 and 1922 during the course of this research in late 2012, revealing she was already an avid collector and sender of picture postcards as a teenager and young woman. She may have been first introduced to this Edwardian era craze (Rogan 2005) by her mother Ellen’s international correspondence with her sister and niece in Ireland.

If dated to *circa* 1910, the Round Table postcard, travelling as sea mail, landed into port thirty to thirty-five years after Ellen Carroll’s own cross-hemisphere passage and arrival by immigrant ship into the Queensland colonial port of Townsville in Currumbilbarra country.

2.2.2 The Round Table Postcard as an Affective Image-Object

Towards the Image-Object

My deepening interest in the postcard and its doings in encounter, its irrefutable affectivity as a spark to becomings beyond those fleeting moments, connects with my understanding of it as an image-object—a hybrid two-sided, material-visual form—and *this* particular postcard as an *affective image-object*.[2]

This has emerged within my trajectory of practice as an object maker already concerned with the energies and movement of affect and attunement. Evolving an oeuvre of making material objects 'for the hold of hand as well as eye' (Boscacci 1999) has been central to my practice as a ceramic object maker. Hapticity, bodily or somatic engagement with portable objects has been a key conceptual and materially-realised theme. A porcelain bowl, for instance, made to be picked up, held up to the light, shaped to be turned over to find a proffering of engraved text or embossed image in the foot ring, or materially inlaid with tracks of opaque textural lines that invite fingertip scanning (Figure 2.3). Such small seemingly simple, familiar forms as bowls cannot be adequately encountered only with the scan of eyes.

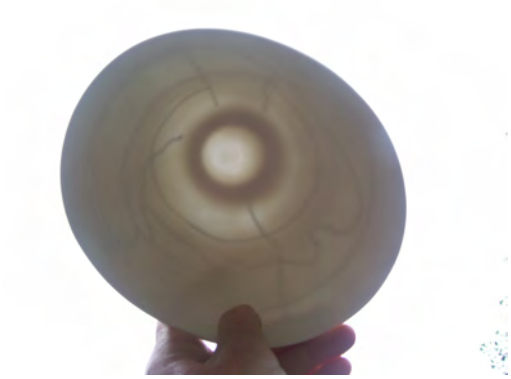

Figure 2.3. Louise Boscacci, *Catherine's bowl*, 2006.
Translucent porcelain, 16 x 12 cm.

[2] The emergence of this line of thinking is elaborated further in Chapter Three, 'Of Affect'. I am interested in the particularity of this object as a creative trigger in my own subjectivation—as an affectively generative provocation, and why. To be clear, my underlying contention here is that every object defies an absolute or singular response and interpretation.

Figure 2.4. Louise Boscacci, *Bowl for 264 species*, 2007.
Diamond-point engraved stoneware ceramic, 39 x 17 cm.

Other larger forms of bowls and acid jars that carry hand engraved texts are intended for whole-bodied encounters. For example, *Bowl for 264 species*, 2007 (Figure 2.4), engraved with the species list of endangered Australian fauna in a continual spiral that begins in the inner well and ends on the outer underside, was made to be lifted up in two hands and rotated wheel-like, counter-clockwise, for a fuller, participatory 'reading' if desired (Boscacci 2008b).

Figure 2.5. Yellow-footed Antechinus, in hand.

This exploration of the hapticity of objects in the intersection of practice and contemporary craft theory (Rowley 1997; Attiwill 2000; Boscacci 2008a) was first informed by my daily field practice of biological research and the generous teachings of small animals in the hand. How to 'identify' a marsupial mouse lifted from a pitfall trap of ecological survey? In the hand, with one's body animated yet calm, cued and reflexive, attentive to care, and alert to escape (Figure 2.5). And with one's eyes: focused, quickly scrutinising particularities and subtleties of fur colour, pouch, front feet, hind feet underpads, ears, tail length. And all over: manipulating both sides, because in the lexicon of biology, animals, including humans, have a dorsal (upper; back) and a ventral (under; belly) side.

Recto, Verso

A picture postcard has a *recto* and a *verso*: an image side, the contemporary recto, and the message and postal stamp side, the verso. Not dissimilar to handling a small animal, the Round Table postcard was a haptic object whose affectivity was two-sided in origin: both *recto* and *verso* contributed to the affective provocation in encounter. An 'image-object' is a hybrid form that has intriguing resonance with making material objects in ceramic media, particularly my specific oeuvre of engraving hand-written text into the object. But it is also evocative of a photographic print that, unlike a digital photograph, always has two sides as a materially tangible form which not only carries a pictorial image, but often also annotations of provenance, people/place/event depicted, and date, on the back or blank *verso*.

Verso 1984

Hector Lang, a senior Aṉangu craftsman I met on the northern edge of the South Australian Nullarbor in 1984, eloquently reinforced the existence of a photograph as a two-sided, three-dimensional 'image-object' when I him handed one.[3] It was a 10 x 8 inch black and white print of a rare, possibly extinct, desert mammal. Did he know this animal? Hector held the photograph between two hands, and took a long, scanning look at the animal depicted. He was systematic and unrushed. Then, just as considered, he turned the photograph over in two hands to examine the other side—the other side of the animal I quickly realised by his reaction—which, from the perspective of a three dimensional enworlding over a lifetime, one would expect to find there. This was not a quick glimpse to see if there *was* anything written or added verso. Hector appeared to be momentarily both surprised and confused, quickly realised there was no 'belly' side to this form, or the animal pictured, and handed it back with a shake of his head. No, he did not know the animal. But his teaching, recalled and returned to later as an object maker, and by this postcard encounter, was to articulate and think 'image-object'.

'Synsensorial' encountering

A two-sided postcard engages both haptic and visual senses synergistically. Both vision and touch, foremost, were collaboratively at work in this encounter: the open image of Cliffs first to the eyes, then the reveal of its affective message by hands that pick up, invert the image-object, and 'behold' it, with care. This, I propose, is a *synsensorial* encountering in which both the visual and the haptic senses, in particular, acted synergistically in the

[3] Boscacci et al. (1987); also see Chapter Eight.

intensity of the affective impingement. The image-object is a material haptic-visual form of engagement. But the encountering was not just the province of hands and eyes; it was whole-bodied and multi-sensorial in activation—my step and reach forward to pick it up between fingers (kinetic movement), the accompanying familiar, idiosyncratic sounds of the 'backyard' and the boom city street nearby entering the room (attuned listening), the aroma of the warm bay wafting through the open windows on the northeasterly breeze (olfactory stimulation) were also in play in the affective meeting. Chapter Three, 'Of Affect', canvasses theoretical entanglements of sensation and affect in more detail. But, before that, my articulation of *synsensorial*, a-bodied encountering, stresses the perceived *synthetic and synergistic* workings of affective provocation entangled with multisensory experience. It is a lexical becoming of this impingement returned to in after-thought and my rumination on the lingering 'wonder' at the physical intensity of the ostensibly fleeting moment of encounter. I propose to use this wording, and elaborate its iterations throughout this thesis, as part of a creative, 'right fit', vocabulary seeded by postcard_*affectus*.

A Materially Ephemeral Time Shard

Tracing the 'angles of arrival' of the postcard in origin and passage, along with the gleanings of family lore and the familial context of its correspondence, revealed nuances resonant in the image-message; these have enhanced my understanding of its long life as keepsake—a kept-safe object—and its contemporary affectivity as a material-visual form. My mother recounted that Ellen, in her old age, often spoke of the Cliffs of Moher, enunciating the 'Moher' in her strong Irish brogue, recalling them into her near sphere each time (M. E. Boscacci, pers comm., 2011; numerous occasions).

The Round Table postcard is, after all, a material survivor. Classed as Ephemera in institutional collections, a mass-produced, travelling postal form intended for one-off use, it was not intended for longevity (Rogan 2005). Its safe tending first by Ellen, and then by successive hands over its long passage into the private family archive ensured its longevity, in relatively good condition, even as it has continued to discolour, fade, become brittle and crumble at the edges. To my mind, this century-old image-object landed on the table of encounter as a fragile, materially ephemeral, time shard. This was in stark contrast with the ceramic materiality of studio practice: ceramic brittleness and frangibility creates vitreous shards that are long lived, however fragmented. And this, as an artist-maker, was compelling: a small, materially fragile and ephemeral object capable of triggering an intense and lingering provocation. It was still travelling; its movement unfinished.

2.3 A-bodied, Involuntary and Activating: the movement of impingement

One of the provocations of the Round Table postcard was a virtual portation back to the Nullarbor cliffs, a recall not only vivid as a mind's eye visualisation, but redolent with 'feeling tones' of that blustery bright, fecund, limestone cliff place. Such a phenomenon escapes effability. How could a 100-year-old postcard virtually emplace me back on the cliff line on the western arc of the Great Australian Bight, standing in low heath of the karst pan where I once did, immersed, and imbibing the edgeland between the continent and the Southern Ocean? I was surprised and intrigued by the somatic-cognitive—a-bodied—intensity of this encounter. It is not easy to articulate the force and nuances of this movement. I have written numerous descriptions over time, but words seem, ultimately, inadequate. How to expand an understanding of this intense corporeal encountering?

Fright, Fight, Flight and 'Evanescent Assemblies'

From the perspective of human physiology, the 'shiver down the back' and 'goose bumps' on the body (*cutis anserina*) are part of the autonomic nervous system's 'fight, fright, and flight' responses (Pocock et al. 2013; Noback et al. 2005). In this, the human vertebrate body is primed for action, as if under physical threat or attack. Sensory stimulated emotional states of excitement or fear trigger the release of excitatory hormones noradrenaline and adrenaline. The rush of noradrenaline elevates the heartbeat, promotes vasodilation (enhanced visual reception), and primes the somatic musculature for rapid movement (Noback et al. 2005, p351). The rush of adrenaline causes involuntary muscle shiver (the 'shiver down the back') and goose bumps, or *cutis anserina*. The latter is a reflex contraction of the hair erector muscles of the skin. As part of the *autonomic* nervous system and modulated by the hypothalamus (outside the cerebral cortex of the brain), these responses largely bypass conscious control (Noback et al. 2005). They are 'involuntary'. When I first encountered the Round Table postcard, first by eye then both eye and hand, this involuntary, corporeal experience was immediate and intense. I experienced it as a palpable physical jolt of internal movement.

In the terminology of neuroscience (Greenfield 2000, 2012), the encounter was simultaneously and irreducibly a subjective 'consciousness event' in which the sensory-somatic and cognitive-emotional systems worked together to trigger the gamut of associations, memories, and experiential states of surprise, excitement, delight, doubt, intrigue. In a curious resonance of language, neuroscientist Greenfield (2012) has described

‘evanescent assemblies’ of nerve cell connections that form in the cerebral cortex of the brain by sensory stimulation. These ‘neuronal assemblies’ are ‘highly transient’, and ’erstwhile ephemeral assemblies’. Using the analogy of throwing a stone into a pool of water for the triggering of a consciousness event, Greenfield has posited that the size of the event—the scale of the assembly of neuronal connections recruited, or ‘the ripple’—is dependent on the size of the stone thrown, the force with which is thrown, and the actions of various modulator hormones of the human nervous system. Hence, the larger the stimulation—the stronger the sensory-cognitive impingement—the larger the areas of neuronal assembly activated.

In order to connect this neurophysiological understanding with an embodied encounter (‘the phenomenological’), Greenfield posed the example of a photograph of a group of male colleagues on display in her office. For her, this was a special photograph because it was a gathering of people with whom she had formed a close working relationship and friendship over a long span of time. Each person in the frame stimulated specific associations and memories particular to her individual relationships. Thus, her simultaneous sensory (visual) and cognitive engagement with the image would be predicted to recruit a large-scale coalition of brain cell connections. Because the photograph and the group were special to Greenfield, her physiological response would be of a level of intensity particular to her. For other people looking at the image, a more generic interpretation or response might be predicted: a group of middle-aged men in suits. In her language, the ‘consciousness event’ sparked by the photograph was triggered by the complex of sensory and cognitive systems working together. In this instance, vision was the primary source of sensory stimulation. Greenfield also observes that tactile, seeing and hearing experiences are perceived differently even though the brain treats them the same way once past the sense organs: all sensory stimuli are transduced or translated into electrical pulses. They are the same physiological ‘becoming’ in form.

Thus, as Greenfield articulated, the stimulation of the photographic image, which might usefully be compared with the language of ‘impingement’ or ‘affective impingement’ used here, involved complex inter-workings of the sensory-somatic and cognitive systems of the encountering body. It is an autonomic somatic-cognitive sparking—this involuntary or reflexive, a-bodied movement accompanied by its cognitive bloom net—that also describes the intense spark of postcard-*affectus*. But the affective triggering was creative flight, not fight: an experience of animation and lift off, a vital push impossible to ignore.

2.4 Affective Place: affective emplacement, provocations and discontents

I met this postcard amidst an unfolding trajectory of practice that had progressively explored concepts of 'place' and emplacement. Within an evolving vocabulary of material translations of experiential response, the card became part of a still-moving passage of making and thinking that engaged creatively and critically with 'relational place'. My practice has moved from the lexical framework of 'landscape' to 'place' (Boscacci 1999, 2003), and from the broad terminology of 'place' (a multivalent term used in a vast constellation of creative production and transdisciplinary humanities scholarship) to focus on relationality and affectivity. A key interest has been unpicking and unsettling concepts of 'home place', 'dwelling' and 'sense of place' by drawing in eco-entangled thinking and embodied experience. My pathway of praxis has explored and travelled with concepts of Topophilia (Tuan 1990), the expanded idea of 'homesickness' induced by local ecological loss in the neologism Solastalgia (Albrecht 2005; Albrecht et al. 2007), and its antidote, Soliphilia (Albrecht 2009), and the playful affective path-making drifts of place encounters activated by Psychogeography and the dérive (McDonough 2004; Boscacci 2010). This passage of movement has been rendered in gallery exhibitions, journal publications, an artist blog ('Groundtruthing Projects' 2007–2009), and presentations and lectures in public symposia. And, emerging en route has been a particular articulation of works as 'place-settings', 'objects of encounter', 'witness objects', 'marked carriers of place and time', 'witness of ecological loss', and the 'synthetic movement' of making and thinking (Ballard 2006; Boscacci 2006, 2007, 2008b, 2010, 2011). Integral to the material forms of emplacement and idiolocal witness has been an oeuvre of *return*; return, to the homing grounds and perceptual spaces of the Townsville-Currumbilbarra region, the arrival place of the postcard.

Norrie Clair's handwritten words on the card, *verso*, connected powerfully with this transit of practice, triggering another involuntary shiver of recognition, cognitive resonance, and intrigue:

> ***…*** *this is a part*
> *of my County that's the Place*
> *I am called after Claire ask*
> *your Mother if she knows where the*
> *round Table is there I bet she does*

Her words were, to my reading, a chiming echo of the theme of relational place, an articulation of idiolocal and particular emplacement and belonging, rendered in eloquent simplicity: local County, the Cliffs, and an implied familiarity and familial connection with the Round Table, a structure on the cliffs incompletely included the foreground of the 'view'. Her words were a succinct articulation of emplaced-embodied identity, positively and assuredly intertwined with the 'concrete situatedness' (Casey 2009, p23) of home terrain: 'my County … that's the Place I am called after ...'.[4]

The topophilic echo heard in Norrie Clair's words was clarion clear. But, added nuances have been gleaned in this message from family lore and genealogical tracings sparked by this postcard and its life history. In the words, '*… ask your Mother if she knows where the round Table is there … I bet she does'*, Norrie appears to eloquently affirm the unbroken belonging of a distant, absent 'insider'—her sister Ellen who had emigrated to north Queensland thirty years previously. Ellen was being prompted about the Cliffs and the Round Table, reminded not to forget, and simultaneously re-emplaced despite her physical absence. In this material-visual epistolary of connection across hemispheres, she was still held within the fold of family, home range and county of belonging via 'the round Table there', even if by that stage Norrie was cognisant that Ellen, with a family of six children, was unlikely ever to bodily return to the Cliffs and its table.

An early becoming of postcard_*affectus* was to think about relational places of embodied attunement and continuing affective provocation as 'affective places', in the Spinozan-Deleuzian sense of affect. I have come to conceive and name this as 'Affective Place'. The former, formative 'homing grounds' of focus, the Wulgurukaba country of Currumbilbarra, the port of arrival in of both Ellen Carroll and the Round Table postcard, is one such affective place—the first and a long term one of push and pull, augmentation and diminution, creative provocation, curiosity, and not-yet-ness.[5] 'Affective Place' is a naming of thematic (re)focus that also comes to be another name for the situated, yet unmapped/ unmappable locus I am responding to in Townsville-Currumbilbarra country. This is an idiosyncratic locality in itself—an idiolocal(e)—but even more, as an affective place (to

[4] Note that Clair, Norrie's married name, is phonetically homophonous with County Clare in the English language; in Irish, it is Contae an Chláir (Koch 2006, p348). In either case, she draws the connection to her home county of lineage.

[5] After Gregg & Seigworth (2010, p14): 'Thus, this "how" of an aesthetics of affect becomes one way to bridge from "not yet" to the "next"'.

me), my responses are idiosyncratic and individual to it. It is this sphere of embodied attunement-emplacement that is being explored in the creative-critical trace of postcard_*affectus*. I refer to this physical/actual-virtual locus as Affective Place, the affective place, and my affective place, as I proceed within the thesis. The following texts and compositions explore and expand this thinking-making of 'Affective Place', and its becomings in a creative vocabulary of *affective emplacement, its synsensorial provocations* and *ecological discontents*.

Most acutely within the broad reach of practice, I arrived at the postcard at a juncture of wanting to conceptually dig and imaginatively roam more in the nebulous, ephemeral, immaterial and often ineffable milieu of this affective place—the haecceity of 'atmosphere' of these homing grounds still capable of empowering and depowering as no other. If affect speaks with the 'voice of the imperative' (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, p13), this postcard, a small, cryptic, unostentatious, materially ephemeral, travelling time shard suggested potential—futurity as Clough (Clough & Halley 2007) puts it. All this was, in the force of its affective push, impossible to ignore.

2.5 Conclusion

Gathering

In response to the generative trigger of postcard_*affectus*, this chapter drew first on the Spinozan-Deleuzian conception of affect (*affectus/ affectio*) as one of intensities and transient forces that pass through bodies and enhance or diminish capacities to act, to engage, and to connect. Affective energies that enhance, diminish or arrest creative embodied action where mind and body are not a creative duality—rather, embodied mind/ minded body—are what I have come to refer to, after Massumi's 'a-bodying' (2014, p340), as *a-bodied*. My unpicking of the encounter explored the cognitive sparking of place associations, memory, conceptual links, and new creative ideas that flowed-emerged in the wake of the event. But the intensity of the involuntary 'shivers' of an autonomic bodily reaction—experienced almost as a bolt of electricity through the body—irrevocably introduced a new heightened awareness of a-bodied *movement* into this affective punctuation. The continued embrace of this synergistic 'force' has been creatively energising and generative.

And still moving, this postcard …

> Affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves the connection between ideas, values and objects (Ahmed 2010, p29).

Where to in the further becomings of postcard_*affectus*? Three 'sticky' strands of postcard_*affectus*—the makings and unmakings of this affective, material image-object; the activations of synsensorial, a-bodied encountering; and scholarly enquiry and thinking about Affective Place—are picked up and travelled with through the compositional pathway laid out ahead.

Chapter Three, 'Of Affect' presents a scoping review of contemporary affect theory and scholarship. It elaborates the approach taken in this chapter, but is also presented as a piece of scholarly review and thinking in the unfolding of the larger research trace. My thinking towards, and within, a lexicon of 'affective objects' (including the 'affective image-object') is critically unfolded and expanded here.

From the Round Table postcard itself, I was led deeper into the private familial archive of historical and vintage photographic prints and collected idiolocal ephemera. The process of working with this archive and my course of making-thinking rendered in new studio works, is presented in Chapter Four, 'To the Archive'—the next push of postcard_*affectus*.

Chapter Three

Of Affect

3.1 Encountering Affect

In a lecture on Gilles Deleuze's 'The Geology of Morals', speculative realist Manuel DeLanda (2007) alluded to the Swiss Alps and 'their magnificence' outside the window of the lecture room to invoke the affectivity of the artist in relation to the nonhuman realm:

> At the moment that we lose the capacity to be affected by those mountains, at the moment we lose the capacity to *be moved* by those mountains, we lose something very important. And if we are artists we lose something even more. Because that means we are becoming now obsessed with the human world, with politics—not that that is unimportant—but if we become too concentrated on what is only too human, we lose a sense of our otherness, our real otherness, which is geology, chemistry, biology.

DeLanda's words resonate with my experience at first sighting the Irish Cliffs of Moher on the Round Table postcard. The electrical, bodily jolt and my swift, virtual portation back to the unforgettable Australian Nullarbor was yet another reminder of the ability of my bio-chemical-flesh self to be affectively moved. In this instance, it was by an allusive image and accompanying words on a small fragile card, but I intuited that the intensity of this experience was important although I knew neither why nor how, at that time.

My first conscious encounter with the ambiguity and possibilities of the word 'affective' came when reading the final introductory paragraph of the human geographer Yi Fu Tuan's classic text on place, *Topophilia*:

> *Topophilia* is the affective bond between people and place or setting. Diffuse as concept, vivid and concrete as personal experience … (Tuan 1990, p4).

In that moment, unclear what he meant, I immediately coupled 'affective' with 'affectionate', yet knew this was both inaccurate and partially implied. 'Affective'

seemingly carried allusion to positive emotional attachment and relations, but I was wary of too readily assuming a romanticist characterisation of human perceptions of lived places and spaces.

In the mid-nineties, following my own trajectory from the sciences to the visual arts, and exploring the possibilities of this cross-fertilisation in my nascent thinking and making with objects and images, I was led to the science-art infused philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their text *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). There, as translated from the French by Brian Massumi, was 'affect' again. Massumi makes clear, however, that Deleuze and Guattari's affect/ affection (*L'affect/ L'affection*) are drawn from and re-conceive the seventeenth century Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza's notions of *affectus* and *affectio:*

> *L'affect* (Spinoza's *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. *L'affection* (Spinoza's *affectio*) is each state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include 'mental' or ideal bodies) (Massumi, pxvi in Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

Explicitly: '[n]either word [L'affect/ L'affection: Affect/ Affection] denotes a personal feeling (sentiment in Deleuze and Guattari)' (Massumi, pxvi in Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

Although more diffusely apprehended in Tuan's usage, these two early encounters presented and connoted two radically different uses and meanings of affect.

In analytical response to the generative trigger of postcard_*affectus*, already introduced, I drew first on the Spinozan-Deleuzian notion of affect as a conception of intensities and transient forces that pass through bodies and enhance or diminish capacities to act. My unpicking of the encounter explored the rich cognitive sparking of association, memory, questions and creative ideas engendered by, and following, that fleeting moment. But the intensity of the bodily reaction—a seeming bolt of 'electricity' through the body interpreted, at least contingently, in terms of the fright, flight and fight response of the autonomic nervous system—highlighted the complex embodied dimension of my response.

Both the cognitive and somatic flows irreducibly introduced a consideration of *movement* into this affective punctuation.

In the early stages of unfolding this project, I realised that the word 'affective' drew divergent responses when I speculated on the usefulness of thinking in terms of 'affective place' and 'affective objects'. This direction had emerged from my own timeline of practice-based research, coupled with an attempt to open up possibilities suggested by the postcard encounter. My thinking was directed towards the Deleuzian sense of the terms affect and affection, not the emotions per se, but I came to realise that it was the latter—emotion—that appeared to be a widely held and first interpretation of meaning. Digging further, the terminology of affect, the affective, and affectivity, inhabits a vast spectrum of recent scholarship across the humanities as well as the affective sciences. To better understand the plurality of meanings and allusions that accompanies usage, I undertook a scoping review of recent affect theory to think about the following questions: What is affect? Which affect? What does affect do? What might it become?

From this passage of inquiry, I shall unpick resonant strands of theory and practice that interlace with, chime against or inform my thinking-making trajectories. Through this, I intend to circle back to the driving question of this research trace: What might postcard_*affectus*—the provocative triad of material postcard, a-bodied stimulus, and emplaced attunement—become?

3.2 Affect in Theory: Turns, Terms and Entanglements

Sociologist Patricia Clough's phrase 'the affective turn' (Clough & Halley 2007), coined to describe a distinctive shift away from 'the linguistic turn' of late twentieth century postmodernism in philosophy and cultural studies, eloquently captures the energetic bloom of scholarship on affect across multiple disciplines and practices of the humanities over the course of the past decade (Thrift 2008; Navaro-Yashin 2009; Gregg & Seigworth 2010).

In the wake, and still in the midst, of this unfolding 'bloom space' of inquiry, theorists and writers Gregg and Seigworth (2010) distil two principal vectors of contemporary affect studies:

1. That stemming from psychologist Silvan Tomkins' pioneering psychobiology of differential Affects (Tomkins & Karon 1962). 'Shame in the Cybernetic Fold', a 1995 paper by gender and queer studies theorists Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank, re-animated interest in Tomkins' categorical naming of 'the affects' in terms of human emotion states (Sedgwick & Frank 1995 in Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p5). In doing so, Tomkins also distinguished between the drive and the affect system, such that:

> Affects can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any number of other things, including other affects. Thus, one can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy (Sedgwick 2003, p19).

Significantly, for Tomkins, the face is the chief site of affect: the face is not the expression of something else, but affect in process (Thrift 2008, p177).

2. That emerging from philosopher Gilles Deleuze's 'Spinozist ethology of bodily capacities' (Gregg & Seigworth 2010, p5).[1] Deleuze's late twentieth century re-interpretations of the seventeenth century Baruch Spinoza's treatise the *Ethics* were made accessible to English language scholars by the philosopher-translator Brian Massumi (Deleuze & Guattari 1987; Massumi 2002; Cook 2007). Massumi's 1995 paper 'The Autonomy of Affect' was seminal in sparking a resurgence of interest in this strand of affect theory (Gregg & Seigworth 2010, p5). In Spinozan-Deleuzian affect:

> [A]ffects are not feelings, they are becomings that go beyond those who live through them (they become other) (Deleuze 1995, p137 in Thrift 2008, p116).

As Clough & Halley (2007, p2) articulate, Spinozan-Deleuzian 'affect refers generally to bodily capacities to affect and be affected or the augmentation and diminution of a body's capacity to act, to engage, and to connect, such that autoaffection is linked to the self-feeling of being alive—that is, aliveness or vitality'. It is to this second strand of affect scholarship that I shall return to locate the research trace/tracery in a language of processual passage, doings and becomings, finer-grained textures and haecceities of compositions.

[1] See Deleuze (1988, p125) where he explicitly articulates and discusses 'ethology' in relation to Spinoza.

The concept of affect, then, as Gregg and Seigworth succinctly articulate 'has gradually accrued a sweeping assortment of philosophical/ psychological/ physiological underpinnings, critical vocabularies, and ontological pathways, and, thus, can be (and has been) turned toward all manner of political/ pragmatic/ performative ends' (2010, p5). From this position, however, they contingently lay out eight finer-gauged strands of contemporary scholarship and related praxis as 'affectual orientations' (2010, pp5–9). Cross-overs are noted, but these tendencies usefully sketch a working framework of the broad transdisciplinary reach of the conceptual lenses of affect over recent decades. I have also added to this scaffold, flagging recent scholarship of relevance to investigations of affect and objects, affective place relations and atmospheres, in particular.[2] A summary is given in the text box insert, below.

What these two main strands of affect theory and their spectra of scholarship point to is a continuing contemporary plurality around the use and intended meaning of the terminology: most commonly, affect and emotion are used interchangeably, or equated and interpreted as synonymous in meaning. Indeed, Patricia Clough observes that the early focus of the turn to affect in the mid-1990s by critical theorists and cultural critics was on 'the circuit from affect to emotion', and 'the subject as the subject of emotion' (2010, p207). Writing at the end of the first decade of this century, Clough flags a new focus on Spinozan-Deleuzian affect[3] 'without following the circuit from affect to subjectively felt emotional states' evident in new media and biomedia, particularly the space opened out by Massumi's (2002) work on the virtual-actual circuit of affect and consciousness (2010, p207).

[2] Not included here are philosophers variably allied with speculative realism who also explicitly engage with affect: Jane Bennett (2010), for instance, will be considered more fully in this chapter in relation to objects and affect. Nor have I included what I speculatively name as scholarship emerging at the intersection of the affective and the ecological—eco-affective entanglements—which I embrace and make more concrete as a becoming of my research trace in Chapters Six and Eight.

[3] Via Deleuze and Guattari, Spinoza and Bergson, who 'conceptualize affect as pre-individual bodily forces augmenting or diminishing a body's capacity to act' (Clough 2010, p207).

A summary of eight orientations in contemporary affect scholarship

(from Gregg & Seigworth 2010; referred to with the abbreviation GS).

1. Practices that investigate intimate interlacings of human/non-human 'nature' in phenomenologies and post-phenomenologies of embodiment, with, for example, interest in the senses and sensual engagements beyond the exclusively visual.[1] Included are Vivian Sobchack, Don Idhe, Michel Henry, Laura Marks, Mark Hansen (GS, p6). For example, Vivian Sobchack, a cinema and media theorist, argues from a position that '[a]ll perception and expression, all its structural modalities, emerge in embodied and enworlded existence and partake of it' (Sobchack 1992, p41).[2]

2. Related, or intertwined with the first set are: cybernetics (human/ machine/inorganic assemblages); neurosciences of matter, emotion/sensation; artificial intelligence; robotics; and bio-informatics and bioengineering (GS, p6).

3. Contemporary trajectories in non-Cartesian philosophy, 'usually linking the movements of matter with a processual incorporeality (Spinozism)' (GS, p6). Included here are feminist philosophical critiques of gendered epistemologies (Rosi Braidotti, Elizabeth Grosz, Genevieve Lloyd, Moira Gatens, and I would contingently add the ecophilosopher Val Plumwood (1993)); Italian autonomism (Paolo Virno, Maurizio Lazzartto); philosophical cultural studies (musician and theorist Lawrence Grossberg, Meaghan Morris, Brian Massumi); and political philosophy (Giorgio Agamben, Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri) (GS, pp6–7).

4. '[C]ertain lines of psychological and psychoanalytic inquiry' (GS, p7) such as the human subject-centred work of Sigmund Freud, Silvan Tomkins, Daniel Stern. This is characterised by 'a categorical naming of affects' or emotion states (GS, p7). Gibbs (2010, p188 in Gregg & Seigworth 2010) points out that Silvan Tomkins' view of

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[1] The phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1992) is a salient influence.

[2] To Sobchack, 'the moving picture makes itself sensuously and sensibly manifest as the expression of experience by experience' (1992, p3).

the affects as being biologically innate was derived from zoologist Charles Darwin's observations in 'The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals'. In turn, Gibbs (2010) flags the extension of Tomkins' work into contemporary discourse by cultural theorist and writer on emotions and expression, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (Sedgwick 2003).[3]

5. Politically-engaged activist theorists of the everyday and 'experience' approached in 'collective and external' ways more than 'individual and interior' (GS, p7). Queer theorists, feminist and disability activists are exemplars here.

6. Broad humanities-related movement from the late twentieth century 'linguistic turn', evidenced from cultural anthropology, geography, communication and cultural studies to performance-based art practices and literary theory. The influence of quantum, neuro- and cognitive sciences is noted (GS, p7). Raymond Williams' 'structure of feeling' is a prominent exemplar and influence. Re-attunement to the proximal somatic senses (touch, smell, taste, rhythm, the kinetic sense) and the autonomic nervous system is a focus in 'affective encounters' in non-discursive arts such as architecture (GS, p8).[4] The work of geographer-theorist Nigel Thrift (2008), which draws strongly on a Spinozan-Deleuzian interpretation of affect as well as the phenomenology of embodiment, might come to perch here. Contemporary visual arts installation practices might also be added here, exemplified by the sensography of installation artist Agnieszka Golda (2012). Contemporary craft/ object theorists and practitioners that have shifted a critical lens back onto the role of the haptic and kinetic senses in aesthetic encounters and the making of meanings might be provisionally positioned here; for example, Jill Bennett, Sue Rowley (Rowley 1997).

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[3] As an addendum and extending from the humanities focus of this schema, the Swiss Centre for Affective Sciences (2011), a transdisciplinary centre for the scientific study of emotions (interchangeably used with 'affect'), lists 130 verbal labels for major affect states.

[4] For example, the premise of *Sensing Spaces*, a prominent 2014 exhibition of architecture at the Royal Academy, London, was to stage encounters in architect-designed spaces that focus on sensorial apprehension of human-made spaces and atmospheres created by intangible and ephemeral elements such as odours and light (Royal Academy of Arts 2014).

7. An approach arising from critical discourses of the emotions and histories of emotions that are tied less to individual, interiorised subjectivity and seek to explore 'resonant worldlings and diffusions of feelings/ passion' (GS, p8) in relation to crowds, social atmospheres, and contagions or transmissions of feelings; the work of Gabriel Tarde is flagged here. The work of Teresa Brennan (2004) on the transmission of affect would be another prominent reference point.

8. An approach located in practices of science and science scholarship in which 'affect is the hinge where mutual matter and wonder … perpetually tumble into one another' (GS, p8). The work of the philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers (Stengers & Deutscher 2000) and the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (Rapp 1990) are flagged here. I would also provisionally add Karen Barad (2007, 2012) whose agential realism draws from quantum field physics to rethink matter in terms of quantum entanglements and transmateriality; her work is infused with scales and ontologies of touch, wonder, the electric body, and ethical being-becoming.

However, affect conceptualisation is also entangled with the body and embodiment—the somatic dimension of the (poly) senses, with shifts in focus to the proximal and interoperative modes of touch, hearing, smell, proprioception, and kinesis, the moving or enacting body. I suggest that this is a third key strand—and potential doubling—of confusion in readings-receptions of the word-concept. For example, geographer and theorist Thrift's (2008) 'Non-representational Theory' entangles Spinozan-Deleuzian affect, embodiment and sensation into a notion of 'the push' (2008, p182). Thrift posits affect as '*a form of thinking*, often indirect and non-reflective true, but thinking all the same' (2008, p182). His theoretical trajectory advocates 'moving towards a poetics of encounter' which recognises the value of 'the unsayable' (2008, p147).

Certain recent extensions of Thrift's ideas into new practices that adopt affect as a lens of research warrant unpicking. For example, affective geographies research, an emergent affect-related field of digital arts and design exploring new negotiations and digital mappings of urban spaces, articulates methods of inquiry 'rooted in the body. Rather than

documenting place ("making visible"), we take a research-based approach to feel place ("making felt")' (Rhode Island School of Design 2011). Here, 'affective' is equated with *feeling* place by a walking investigator carrying a smart phone to track and record movement on foot within the spaces of a city in the manner of an immersive, psychogeographic dérive, or simply from everyday patterns of movement.[4] Collected digital GPS data is then rendered in manifold ways as alternative maps/ aesthetic objects. 'Affective Geographies' might be interpreted as an innovative actualisation of Thrift's (2008, p171) conceptual 'spatialities of feeling' in creative practice, generating alternative (conceptual-somatic-performative) cartographies of spaces and places. But, it uses affect in a broader and more entangled sense than that of Spinozan-Deleuzian affect; the word 'feeling' connotes the sensing, perceiving, moving body *as well as* the realm of emotion.

'Affective' appears to be increasingly used as an umbrella term in very recent research that seeks to theorise and research aesthetic experience and interactivity in contemporary exhibition or museum contexts—'the experiential turn' (von Hantelmann 2014). Affect, emotion, sensation and action were all denoted by the use of 'affective' in the 2013 new media conference *Affective Experiences* (Parasol Unit 2013). Usefully, however, articulating difference and continuity between affect and emotion was one intention, positing that '[e]motions are *part of the change in the relation between affect and cognition*, argued to be a necessary part of evaluation, interpretation, expression, evaluations of circumstances that provide information about relations to other, objects and events' (Parasol Unit 2013; emphasis added). In the project of visualising dimensions of affect in the art of avant-garde feminist artists, Lygia Clark, Eva Hesse, Ana Mendieta and Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, theorist Susan Best (2011) uses a multifocal lens, drawing on emotion states, Freudian psychoanalytical theory, and philosophical phenomenologies of embodiment and the senses.

What to conclude at this juncture? That the 'relationality' of affect is its most shared theoretical thread, as Gregg & Seigworth (2010, p13) observe? Their distilled articulation of affect as 'forces or forces of encounter' (p2) is a reminder of this. But equally, the imperative in asking the question 'What might an affective provocation become?' is that we attend to both the 'impingement as well as the passage (and the duration of the passage) of

[4] On the dérive , after Guy Debord, see Knabb (2006, p62).

forces and intensities' (2010, p1). From here, I return to *affectus / affectio* to think more about possible becomings.

3.3 Back to *affectus*/ *affectio*

From Deleuze's interpretive readings in a lecture on Spinoza's *Ethics*, some further unpacking of the terminology and meanings of *affectus* and *affectio* is possible. Deleuze (1978) says:

> In Spinoza's principal book, which is called the Ethics and which is written in Latin, one finds two words: AFFECTIO and AFFECTUS… Some translators translate affectio as 'affection' and affectus as 'feeling' [sentiment], which is better than translating both by the same word, but I don't see the necessity of having recourse to the word 'feeling' since French offers the word 'affect.' *Thus when I use the word 'affect' it refers to Spinoza's affectus, and when I say the word 'affection,' it refers to affectio.*

Affectus (affect), for Spinoza, is the continuous variation of someone's force of existing—the *vis existendi*.[5] This force of existing, or power of acting, is affected—enhanced or diminished—continuously by encounters with other bodies and the 'ideas' one has about them. Along this 'melodic line of continuous variation' constituted by affect, Spinoza assigned two poles: 'joy' and 'sadness', and these are the two fundamental passions (not emotions).

Affectio (an affection) is a type of 'idea', along with notions and essence ideas, in Spinoza's construction. But, in relation to *affectus*, it refers more to the modified state or changed capacities of the affected body, its enhanced or diminished power to affect and be affected, to act and be acted on, which is tied to, or modulated by, the 'idea' of this affection—how one thinks about it.[6]

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[5] I continue to draw from the cited lecture by Deleuze (1978) until otherwise indicated. Ian Buchanan (pers. comm., 11 November 2015) kindly authenticated the English translation.

[6] In this, both body and mind are not disconnected in the modulations of affect.

The *occursus*, or chance encounter, introduced in Spinoza's treatise, may be 'good' or 'bad', leading to one extreme, 'joy', in the enhancement of the power of existing, or the other, 'sadness', in the diminishment of vital capacities to affect and be affected: 'What [Spinoza] comprehends are good encounters, bad encounters, increases and diminutions of power', Deleuze says. The *conatus* is the drive of a body to persist, to attain enhancement rather than diminishment, to seek encounters and relations that lead to an affection of joy (enhanced capacity) rather than sadness (diminished capacity).

As Deleuze (1978) frames it, the unanswered question 'What is a body?' (to Spinoza) becomes a consideration of what is common to all bodies—and this is that all bodies are in relations, variations and intensities of movement and rest.[7] So, for Deleuze, Spinoza's crucial contribution to a wider project of philosophical thinking becomes the question 'What can a body do?'—to move us to ask and think about 'what are the (my) bodily capacities for enhancement and diminishment, for being affected and affecting?'.

Deleuze (1978) also emphasises that the *Ethics*, with its propositions on conative bodies, on affective capacities connected to encounters in the continuous melodious line of existence, is *not* about morals or morality. For Spinoza, until a person knows what the body can do, they are not wise. This becomes a *practical*, concrete inquiry as part of *vis existendi*, the vital life.

In beginning to think about the Round Table postcard encounter, postcard_*affectus*, I might have chosen instead to name it postcard_*occursus*. However, my use of *affectus* is intended to carry and draw focus to the affective sphere of this fleeting, powerful encounter with the situated image-object, to make, explore, and evoke connection with Spinozan-Deleuzian affect and its extensions in contemporary scholarship via the language of *affectus*/ *affectio*, and, as an artist-researcher, to thereby ask and begin to respond to the questions: What did the encounter do? What might it become?

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) roam the ground of *affectus*/ *affectio* more freely in ruminations and elaborations. In 'Memories of a Spinozist, II' (Chapter 10, 'Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible'), they write:

[7] A 'body' in Deleuze's Spinozist ethology is later revealed: 'A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea: it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity' (Deleuze 1988, p127).

> Affects are becomings. Spinoza asks: What can a body do? (1987, p256).

On not defining a body by its organs and functions,

> …[I]nstead we will seek to count its affects. This kind of study is called ethology, and this is the sense in which Spinoza wrote a true Ethics (1987, p257).

And:

> We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects … (1987, p256).

Children illuminate dimensions of affect for Deleuze and Guattari, because '[c]hildren are Spinozists' (1987, p256):

> Once again, we turn to children. Note how they talk about animals and *are moved by them*. They make a list of affects. Little Han's horse is not representative but affective …[i]t is defined by a list of active and passive affects … [which] circulate and are transformed within the assemblage: what a horse 'can do' (1987, p257; emphasis added).

What is striking here is Deleuze and Guattari's composition of a conceptual language of affect's *doings* and *becomings*. It is this vocabulary I drew on to pose my initial question: 'What are the doings and becomings of the Round Table postcard encounter?' This approach is adopted as a 'tool' of flow[8], a mode for opening up spaces of creative possibility, whereby my research curiosity and energies are most directed towards seeking the 'possibility spaces involved in tendencies', as DeLanda puts it (2011, p390).

In 'Memories of a Haecceity' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), the nature of *affectus/ affectio* becomes finer-grained:

> There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name *haecceity* for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing … (1987, p261).

[8] Stengers (2005, p185) writes of 'tools for thinking … [that] make us think and not recognize'.

So, affect's inherent, crucial specificity (particularity) is articulated:

> They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of *relations of movement and rest* between molecules and particles, *capacities to affect* and be affected (1987, p261; emphases added).

The poetic possibilities of affect are thus freed, released, by the individuated spark:

> In Charlotte Brontë, everything is in terms of *wind*, things, people, faces, loves, words. Lorca's 'five in the evening', when love falls and fascism rises. That awful five in the evening! … The hours of the day in Lawrence, Faulkner. A degree of heat, an intensity of white, are perfect individualities … (1987, p261).

In 'Memories of A Spinozist 1', there is this humming proposal:

> Spinoza's approach is radical: Arrive at elements that no longer have either form or function, that are abstract in this sense even though they are perfectly real. They are distinguished solely by *movement and rest, slowness and speed* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp254–5; emphasis added).

Affect has flow and stillness, speed and slowness. Affect makes rhythm.

Selected interpolations of the notion of Spinozan-Deleuzian affect by Massumi (2002) warrant more exploration here.[9] Spinoza defines affect as an 'affection [in other words an impingement upon] the body, *and at the same time the idea of the affection*, (Massumi 2002, p31). His ethics 'is the philosophy of the becoming-active, in parallel, of mind and body, from an origin in passion, in impingement …' (2002, p32). Indeed, to Spinoza, 'it is only when the idea of the affection is doubled *by an idea of the idea of the affection*, that it attains the level of conscious reflection' (2002, p31). So, the bodily (autonomic) and the cognitive responses of the human subject are yoked together in an affective event. This affect-cognition pathway, to rephrase Spinoza's project, has, I suggest, intriguing resonances with expanded understandings of cognition in contemporary neuroscience

[9] Deleuze draws on Spinoza, Bergson and philosopher of science Gilbert Simondon (Massumi 2002, p32).

(Greenfield 2012), invoking notions of the embodied mind/ minded body (Ziemke, Zlatev & Frank 2008). It has also provoked me to think about and within the vital affect-cognition circuit of this processual research trace, as I explored in Chapter Two.

Massumi re-emphasises that Spinozan-Deleuzian affect is not synonymous with emotion, and that it is crucial to theorise the difference:

> An emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity … [i]t is intensity owned and recognized. It is crucial to theorize the difference between affect and emotion (2002, p28).[10]

Affect is continuous 'like a background perception that accompanies every event, however quotidian' (Massumi 2002, p36). However, Thrift usefully reflects on punctuations of continuous affect in the 'surprisingness of the event' (Thrift 2008, p114). To me, the Round Table postcard encounter, which I experienced as an intense impingement, exemplifies such a punctuation.[11]

Affect is virtual: 'the body is as immediately virtual as it is actual' (Massumi 2002, p30)—and synaesthetic:

> Affects are *virtual synesthetic perspectives* anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them (Massumi 2002, p35).

[10] Massumi (2002, p28) reminds us that the word is derived from Spinoza's project of thinking in the *Ethics*, which was written in Latin. However, it should be also be noted that direct Latin to English translations of this same text also use 'emotion' as the equivalent of 'affection'; for example, see Elwes' (1883) translation (Spinoza 1883[1677]).

[11] The word 'punctual' is used by Massumi (2002, p36). Resonant is Roland Barthes word-idea of 'punctum' in relation to the photographic image, meaning 'prick', 'sting, speck, cut … the accident that pricks me … bruises me, is poignant to me' (Barthes 1981, pp26-27). But equally, to me, the word 'punctuation' elicits a connection in thought to the concept of punctuated equilibrium in scientific evolutionary theory whereby intense spikes in speciation, observed to occur in the fossil record after long periods of apparent stasis, have been theorised to explain anomalies in the continuous gradualism account of Darwinian evolutionary theory (Gould 2002). By punctuation, I mean a catalytic spike of intensity in the continuous variation of affect.

What Massumi means by synaesthetic is the implication of 'a participation of the senses in each other: the measurement of a living thing's potential interaction is its ability to transform the effects of one sensory mode into those of another' (2002, p35).

Affect is autonomous, but in *this* way:

> *Its autonomy is its openness*. Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect (Massumi 2002, p35; emphasis added).[12]

In resisting complete capture or closure—in terms of emotion, for example—'something remains unactualized'. This is crucial, because '[i]f there were no escape, no excess or remainder … the universe would be without potential, pure entropy, death' (Massumi 2002, p35).

In summary, Spinozan-Deleuzian affect refers to variations in intensities internal to particular conative bodies; these do not 'leave' a body as autonomous forces to inhabit objects and spaces/ atmospheres in wait to 'enter' another body. As a virtual, transient force, affect cannot be captured and stored ('archived') within a body.[13] But, I propose that its *doing*—its enhancement of the vital capacity of the affected body to move-think-act, for example, as a generative push to new creative composition, or ethical enactment in the practice of an artist—might usefully be conceived as a 'becoming' in the Deleuzian sense.[14]

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[12] Readings of this passage have engendered explorations of notions of non-subjective affect, as apprehended in affective atmospheres (for example, see Anderson 2009; Navaro-Yashin 2009). Here, affect which 'escapes confinement in the particular body' appears to be read as affect autonomously moving from one body to another; arguably Massumi does not imply this, but rather that an affective enhancement or diminishment of a body's capacity to affect other bodies (in a broader sense of 'bodies') is via a relay of encountering that takes place between conative bodies capable of affecting and being affected. This is a rich space for speculative discussion.

[13] Ian Buchanan, pers. comm., 18 March 2013.

[14] Guattari (1989, 1995) proposes that affect leads to a plurality of ethico-aesthetic practices. I return to this thinking again in Chapters Six and Seven.

New compositions as 'becomings', then.[15] The affective doings and becomings (to creative-critical compositions and actions) engendered, sparked, provoked, triggered by a vital impingement, a punctuated event, such as postcard_*affectus*.

3.4 The Contingency of Affect: Chance and Attunement

I now want to flag two other aspects of an affective trigger crucial to thinking about encounters with objects and atmospheres in the expanded research trace: questions of *chance* (or serendipity) and *attunement*.

> We are moved by things. And in being moved, we make things (Ahmed 2010, p33).

Sara Ahmed (2010) uses Patricia Clough's term 'the affective turn' to elaborate a broader notion of affect as an experiential turning towards that which moves one. She stresses 'the messiness of the experiential, the unfolding of bodies into worlds, and the drama of contingency, how we are touched by what we are near' (Ahmed 2010, p30). Here, affect is correlated with sensation and movement, but also implies the movement of emotions/ e-motions, such as happiness. But, I want to focus on her insights on the 'hap' (the chance) of affect, and 'the angle of arrival' (2010, p37), to think more about how affect may operate in relation to objects and the affective atmospheres of a place or space:

> [a]n object can be affective by virtue of its location … and the timing of its appearance. To experience an object as being affective or sensational is to be directed not only toward an object, but to '*whatever' is around that object*, which includes what is behind the object, the *conditions of its arrival* (Ahmed 2010, p33; emphases added).

Thus, 'how we arrive, how we enter this room or that room will affect what impressions we receive' (Ahmed 2010, pp36-7). The atmosphere we may 'feel' [sense or perceive] 'depends on *the angle of our arrival*. Or we might say that the atmosphere is already angled; it is always felt from a specific point' (2010, p37; emphasis added). So, in thinking

[15] As introduced in Chapter One, Bruno Latour's word-concept, 'composition' resonates here (Latour 2010, p473). Composition carries allusion to the fluid, synthetic act of composing as an artist-researcher with materials, images, words, sounds, emergent rhythms, for example, as well as the fertile self-decay of 'compost'.

about affective encounters with objects and atmospheres, '*the "what" of affect … gives way to matters of "how" in the rhythm or the angle of approach*' (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, p14).

Taking a cue from Ahmed, I turn next to reflect more deeply on questions of affect and affective encounters in relation to atmospheres and objects. Whilst my angle of approach is influenced by the trajectory of my prior creative practice, this undertaking emerged in response to questions and intuitions provoked by the postcard encounter, and my desire to explore new insights from recent scholarship that intersect with, enrich and energise the project's emergent passage of creative-critical becomings.

3.5 Affective Atmospheres

I arrived at a deeper consideration of how particular atmospheres might be understood and explored as part of the affective power of a place—as affective atmospheres—via two pathways of tracing. The first was by naming 'affective place' as a new opened-out space of potential for thinking and making in the research passage from postcard_*affectus*. My initial questions were: What of the ineffable, nebulous, virtual—yet palpably 'real'—qualities perceived in this affective northern locale? Or, equally, those of the host room of the postcard encounter dynamically enveloped by that outer affective realm? How to better understand and articulate the unique 'milieu', 'ambience', 'feel' of this situated idiolocal place in a creative response? Might it be useful to consider an atmosphere as a haecceity of an affective place? What scholarship exists around the question of atmosphere and encounters of places/ spaces in the vast multidisciplinary discourse on place, or on place and aesthetics? How might I articulate and expand a vocabulary of thinking-composition that moved beyond a reductive-generalised notion of a 'sense of place'? Can, and how might, atmospheres be not so much 'captured' but 'incorporated' into new compositions, or come to 'infuse' ensembles/ assemblages of new artworks derived from affective encounterings?[16]

[16] This derives from a lens of 'relational place responses' in practice; now, in this thesis, as seen in Chapter Two, I propose a focus on the *synsensorial* encounter. I am drawn to the invocative word pair 'feeling-tones' as engendered by atmospheres, and in the expanded project, by objects and assemblages. Granted, 'feeling' also may connote the emotions. But how to explain very similar experiential responses to atmospheres of particular idiolocal sites as anecdotally expressed by family kin attuned to the same affective place over a long timespan?

The second pathway to thinking about idiolocal atmospheres of affect emerged in the context of my opening review questions: What is affect? What does affect do? The concept of *affective atmospheres*, as developed by Anderson (2009), directly engages with Massumi's philosophical work on the virtual-actual and the distinction between Spinozan-Deleuzian affect and emotion, as discussed earlier.[17] Specifically, affect understood as 'transpersonal or prepersonal *intensities* that emerge as bodies affect one another' is Anderson's starting point to speculate on the proposition of nonhuman or 'subjectless affects' (Anderson 2009, p78, after Massumi 2002; Navaro-Yashin 2009). This notion meets the exploratory work on atmosphere as an aesthetic concept by the phenomenologists Gernot Böhme and Mikel Dufrenne, each of whom shapes different emphases.

In Dufrenne's (1973) philosophy of the aesthetic object, an object's atmosphere is that which overflows representational content, and it is an ineffable quality (Anderson 2009, p79). However, it is *not* an independent property or quality of the object, because it '*elicits a feeling or emotion* in a spectator, viewer or listener who "completes" the aesthetic object and "surpasses" it' (Anderson 2009, p79). Here, atmosphere *is* a singular affective quality *created* by an object—it is 'an intensive space-time'. It is always unfinished, indeterminate, but able to be apprehended in experience, and it alludes to the ineffable. In this way, the atmosphere of a work of art both belongs to it and is always 'in the process of emerging and transforming' (Anderson 2009, p79).

Shifting from aesthetic objects to spaces in Böhme's 'ecological aesthetics', atmospheres are 'spatially discharged, quasi-objective feelings' (Böhme 2006, in Anderson 2009, p80).[18] To arrive at this articulation, Böhme traces the Greek etymological roots of the word: *atmos* to indicate a tendency for qualities of feeling to fill spaces like a gas, and *sphere* to indicate a particular form of spatial organisation based on a circle (Anderson 2009, p80). Thus, Böhme's idea of atmosphere is that of an enveloping sphere *and* a permeation of a space: atmosphere as both resonance and diffusion that 'seem[s] to fill the space with a certain tone of feeling' (Böhme 1993, p114). Such an atmosphere is both radiated by people and, in turn, envelops people or permeates a space such as a room or garden (Anderson 2009, p80).

[17] The work of Brennan (2004) on atmospheres of groups and the transmission of affect in a clinical context is beyond the purview of my investigation.

[18] A 'space' may be a garden, a room, a city (Anderson 2009).

Anderson's concept of affective atmospheres, drawing from Dufrenne and Böhme and Massumi's 'intensities', speculates that atmospheres 'are generated by *bodies—of multiple types*—affecting one another as some form of "envelopment"' (Anderson 2009, p80). An affective atmosphere is generated by 'the assembling of the human bodies, discursive bodies, non-human bodies, and all the other bodies that make up everyday situations' (Anderson 2009, p80). Moreover, an affective atmosphere 'holds a series of opposites—presence and absence, materiality and ideality, definite and indefinite, singularity and generality—in a relation of tension' (2009, p80). Ultimately, affective atmospheres, in this construction, 'do not fit neatly into either an analytical or pragmatic distinction between affect and emotion. They are indeterminate with regard to the distinction between the subjective and the objective', and '*they are impersonal in that they belong to collective situations and yet can be felt as intensely personal*' (Anderson 2009, p80; emphasis added).

Where does this take me? I am still very much where I started with my original questions. However, Jane Bennett's (2010) speculative thinking about assemblages of vital things and materialities in a new concept of objects—'vital' objects —comes to mind as a useful way to think creatively about affective atmospheres of places: that rather than seek the 'what', of atmosphere, to instead explore, idiosyncratically name, and introduce the singularity of *this atmosphere* into the dynamic relations between human and nonhuman participants in an affective encounter. If an atmosphere is embraced as a haecceity of an affective enworlding, what it *does* in terms of its creative provocation becomes a more irresistable path to explore than its pinned-down analysis. Can the sphere of the ineffable ever be pinned down anyway? This passage of thinking sparked by postcard_*affectus* becomes more concrete in my approach to making new works, as I come to describe in Chapter Four. Before then, and at a waypoint in my thinking, I leave this section with a *Memo to Affective Atmospheres*, below.

Memo to Affective Atmospheres

I want to make distinctions and connections of interest between a concept of affective atmospheres and my initial questions about the perceived 'atmosphere' of an affective place—and its doings. Standing alone in the remnant Commons wetland in the cool morning twilight at the far edge of this boom city, I am to certain knowledge, the only person present. Thus, firstly, I am not referring to the assembling of human bodies. Of course, the assemblies of bodies of other-than-human animals co-habiting this space of encounter are assemblies of living bodies, moving, vocalising, and in dynamic relation with each other as I am with them, watching (with binoculars), listening to, or at other times, recording and translating to the mediums of sound, digital photograph or video. They are also aware of my presence, however intentionally cryptic, and are also in dynamic interaction with my embodied presence in their milieu. I am ringed by the blue purple eruptions of mountain, hills, and ranges. The atmosphere is singular to this place, its geological constancy in my lifetime, its distinctive seasonal fluxes, the daily passage of tropical light from soft crepuscular mornings to harsh, bleached middays and baked-still afternoons, to shimmering, saturated, fleeting twilights. A lifetime of words would fail the synsensorial immersion of the singularities and synergies experienced and recognised as a haecceity of the encounter with this wetland bowl itself: a haecceity registered in a vocabulary of 'feeling-tones' perhaps, but an atmosphere of feeling-tones irreducible to its component singularities.

'This', and 'thisness' is a chiming refrain in Deleuze's writings on affect and its potentiality, its becomings. So, each atmosphere is a singularity—this atmosphere, at this time. 'This', and 'thisness', is the reminder for this artist.

(Field Notes, July 2013)

3.6 Affective Objects

> Back to things! (Latour 2005, p14)

> I make bowls when they are the right rhythm and the right time and they tell me so. From the wheel, they arrange themselves, these soft cells on the edge of collapse … (Boscacci 2003).

My interest in investigating objects in relation to affect is two-fold in origin and dimension. It traces a trajectory as a ceramic object maker in practice with a sustained engagement with the notion of 'encounter'—ceramic objects as responses to provocative or seminal encounters, predominantly as place responses, and the material translation of the encounter by/ in the making of new objects/ vessels/ multi-object assemblages. Material translation concerns the 'how': that processual passage from the actual-virtual dimensions of an encounter in a situated place or space to a crystalline stilled object. Embedded in this praxis has been the intention to 'hand on' the object or vessel to a new 'participant-beholder' (after Lygia Clark; Best 2006, 2011) as a form of re-encounter, whether as a robust, waist-high acid jar that carries an engraved spiralling of the names of extinct species and asks to be encircled by the walking body, or as a hand-cuppable, light-catching porcelain beaker that is equally adept as a vessel from which to drink tea. Thus, this trace to affect from postcard_*affectus* extends my interest in, and articulation of, objects as 'carriers' and 'portals'.[19]

But my focus is to inform the unpicking of postcard_*affectus* by thinking about objects as affective triggers or provocateurs in encounter. What studies or practices engage with objects as affective triggers? Which lens of affect is held up? I characterised the postcard as an affective object early in this project to think about both the image-object and the

[19] To background this more, I proposed a notion of 'Portal Objects' in 2010 as part of my studio practice, whereby selected objects or material haecceities of a local place are framed as 'portals' in several senses of the word: as material carriers of place by dint of their made mattering and lived histories of use, and/or as objects that catalyse a powerful portation/ virtual return to spaces, moments, or people carried as embodied memory. As a modality with a focus on materiality, 'Portal Objects' had potential to explicitly and allusively seed the making of new carrier-portal objects, I thought, prior to my own affective turn in thinking and vocabulary in response to the Round Table postcard.

encounter. But how useful is the term 'affective object'? It seems ripe for the confusion that attends the wider realm of affect work. The problematic aspect of this terminology may, however, be a semantic one. In my use, it does not imply a particular affective property is immanent and fixed in the physical entity, ready to be *transmitted* to a receptive person. An 'affective object' *presupposes* an affective encounter or experience with that object—it has been named for that reason. As an artist-maker, I do not claim to *make* 'affective objects', but that an electric spark or trigger of affection has provoked the creation of my new forms that might, in turn, as part of a relay of encountering, spark, evoke, elicit 'movement'—even if no more than a new question, perhaps—in an unknown participant-beholder. But, before then, there are also the dimensions of materiality and process, chance, accident, and heatwork at play in making some-thing (a vitreous object or image-object) from no-thing (?) (plastic, amorphous clay). An affective object, as I use term here, is one that acts on me as a generative trigger. A new object made from the energies of affective movement in response, I prefer to think of as an object of affect(ion)—a material translation or rendition of the affective encounter and its passage of becomings.

My interest in objects in encounter as affective triggers takes focus in relation to postcard_*affectus*—the image-object of the picture postcard in encounter, but more precisely, as part of the generative triad of postcard_a-bodied triggering_situated, affective place. I propose that a route to informing such an object and its relations may be traced from the concept of the 'somatic object' (Bennett 1997, p9), theorised in relation to emergent contemporary craft practices in the late 1990s, and the 'narrative object' (objects as material carriers of stories and histories), exemplified by trends in contemporary ceramics during the past decade, and the recent British Museum project *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (MacGregor 2011).[20] The latter extends a largely archaeological approach that analyses or interprets objects in terms of life histories, biographies and afterlives (Joy 2009). I adopted a life history approach to better understand the travelling Round Table postcard in Chapter Two, and want to focus on the somatic object in the discussion below. Finally, I want to consider resonances and intersections in my passage of thinking about objects and encounters with Jane Bennett's (2010) notion of 'vital things' in lively encounters—an affective assemblage of vital things, vital materialities and lively encounters—as a new conception of the 'vital object'.

[20] For instance, in relation to Australian ceramics, see Jones (2008a, 2008b); Boscacci (2008a).

More broadly, the term ‘affective object’ seems to be a relatively recent emergence in the literature on affect and material objects. Historian Susan Broomhall explicitly studies ‘the affective origins’ of specific medieval and early modern objects; ’affective materiality’ is bound up with these analyses (Broomhall 2013). The term affective, however, refers exclusively to emotion and emotional histories as lenses of investigation. For example, her recent research projects study the relationship of objects, emotions and place in Scotland, and the affective connections to country, and objects entangled with country, by Indigenous custodial owners in the Swan and Canning Rivers region of Western Australia (Broomhall & Pickering 2012). Reflecting on *Feeling Things: A Symposium on Objects and Emotions in History,* convened at the University of Melbourne on 14 March 2013, researchers Sarah Randles and Sarah Downes wrote: ‘There’s a rich seam to be mined in thinking about *how objects carry, deflect, transmit, gather or retain emotional meaning*’ (Randles and Downes, 2013; emphasis added). They also remark on the use of the homonym ‘feeling’:

> ‘Feeling’ we’d talked over, and we both liked the suggestion of the tactile and the physical bound up in that verb, as well as its reference to emotional perception (2013).

However, to return to my project’s vocabulary, derived via the Spinozan-Deleuzian route, what is gained by speaking of the ‘affective object’? What is gained by a focus on the ‘affective encounter’—the fleeting moment and its durational passage of forces and intensities and/ as potentiality? What is lost by a subject-centred approach to the exclusion of an object-focussed one? As an object maker, interested in the affectivity of material things and nebulous atmospheres in encounters, both are relevant. How do I proceed? My resolution is to do both– to embrace and examine the postcard as an image-object with ‘life-history’, and to unpick the encounter. Both are impingements that sparked the research bloom space and trace.

3.7 The Somatic Object

My trajectory of thinking about and making objects also owes a debt to my earlier exposure to the revalorisation of objects, material tactility and the haptic sense in the contemporary craft scholarship of Rowley (1997). Closely allied with this is the notion of ‘the somatic object’ (Bennett 1997).

In developing this characterisation, Bennett returns to the western medieval belief in the notion of 'real presence', in which it was believed that objects could be invested with both supernatural and bodily presence and power and could act accordingly, independently, and at a distance on other living people. For example, in the miracle somatisation of bread in the Catholic ritual mass of transubstantiation, 'bread *becomes* Christ's body, and the communion wine his blood'; this 'host' in turn, 'could perform miracles … just as an icon could cry, talk to a devotee, heal the sick or end a drought' (Bennett 1997, p9).

Moreover, the origin of medieval imagery was in function and purpose:

> Images did not merely *represent* saints and deities, they *literally manifested the presence* of the one depicted and were expected to act, *to move and to be moved*; to exist in some kind of *affective* relationship with human subjects (Bennett 1997, p9; emphases added).

Crucial to the work of the medieval object is the engaged and enacting body:

> Objects, things used, encountered, swallowed, worn, become imbued with bodily presence, precisely because of the ways in which they are activated or incorporated (Bennett 1997, p11).

Noting that the association of the (Christian) body with the vessel—the body as a container—was explicitly forged during this period, Bennett also traces the rise of ocularcentrism in the western art canon to the European Renaissance and a shift to the figurative portrait as the principal analogy for the body. Drawing on the work of sociologist Georg Simmel, she argues this shift was also one in which 'sight and (to some extent) hearing ("distant senses") take precedence over "close contact senses" (smell, taste, touch)'. In consequence, 'our contact with the world becomes less tactile, less haptic; bodies no longer collide … but are perceived optically at a distance. The optic also becomes increasingly a touchstone for the arts' (Bennett 1997, p11). Whereas painting and sculpture in post-medieval western culture were classified as liberal arts, architecture and the crafts were relegated to the applied arts. But in asking where we might look for contemporary forms of the somatic object, Bennett makes connections between contemporary craft practices that deal 'with the corporeality of the object' and older cultural traditions 'where ritual processes invest objects with living presence' (Bennett 1997, p12).

Arguably, outdated art/craft distinctions have been progressively unravelled by art theorists such as Rowley (1997) and a language of 'objects' and 'making' has increasingly been a feature of recent discourse and contemporary practices in ceramics, for example (Stephens, 1995; Attiwill 2000; Fariello & Owen 2004).[21] A linkage of certain medieval beliefs about relations between bodies and objects to contemporary object practices might be problematic only if taken literally. What Bennett (1997) is unpicking, and relacing is the sustained engagement with the body, use or purpose, and 'crafted' or handmade objects:

> Crafted objects are emphatically used and touched; they are produced out of an engagement with the body and are incorporated through everyday activity and ritual. [This] … takes seriously not just the tactility of production but the bodily activity of consumption … (Bennett 1997, p13).

In this manner, the absent body is repeatedly evoked, and objects inherently haptic and relational also manifest a corporeal history: '[m]emory embeds itself in the object; memory as physical trace or conceived as a physical projection—a corporeal writing of the self as object' (Bennett 1997, p13). Thus, these objects 'evoke an *affective* response, operating as they do through the full range of bodily senses'. And:

> 'Looking' … is inescapably a bodily experience (Bennett 1997, p14).

In the contemporary somatic object, the affective response is actively entangled with embodiment and the polysensorial, elevating the role of the haptic in the act of encountering, and repositioning 'looking' as more than the ocular. The trace of postcard_*affectus* carries and extends these ideas in the conception of the triggering image-object, the synsensorial encounter and in my push to make new material objects such as large river bowls (Chapter Five) as new objects of affect.

3.8 Vital Objects and the Ensemblage

'Back to things!' declaimed Bruno Latour (Latour 2005, p14). Echoes of the notion of the somatic object, from its medieval to its contemporary iterations, resonate in the more recent advocacy of ideas of 'vital materiality' and 'vibrant matter' by Jane Bennett (2010). Bennett's speculative realism proposes a notion of vital assemblages as composing an

[21] As a practitioner, I have also addressed this debate in artist lectures (Boscacci 2003, 2008a).

object—a vital object—and a new, possibility-rich angle of approach for thinking about objects, encounters and affect. Vital objects are assemblages of vital things of/ and lively encounters. She elaborates this with:

> By vitality, I mean the capacity of things—edibles, commodities, storms, metals—not only to impede or block the will and design of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own (Bennett 2010, pvii).

Why advocate the vitality of matter? Bennett wants 'to promote … more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities', and 'to induce in human bodies an aesthetic-affective openness to material vitality'. Her focus, however, is on 'the "ecological" character (and potential) of a vital materialism' (2010, px).

In relation to affect, Spinoza is a touchstone, but a notion of 'impersonal affect' is explored in relation to materiality and things in order to 'focus less on the enhancement to human relational capacities resulting from affective catalysts and more on the catalyst itself as it exists in *non-human bodies*'. Bennett wants to emphasise 'even more how the figure of enchantment points in two directions: the first toward the humans who *feel* enchanted and whose agentic capacities may therefore be strengthened, and the second toward the agency of the things that *produce* (helpful, harmful) effects in human and other bodies' (2010, pxii).

But what is meant by impersonal affect? For Bennett, impersonal affect 'or material vibrancy is not a spiritual supplement or "life force" added to the matter said to house it'. She equates affect with materiality; she is not positing affect as 'a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body' (2010, pxiii). Thus, towards her vocabulary of vital materialism, Bennett seeks to explore 'thing-power' and 'the thing formerly known as an object' (pxvi).[22] The 'assemblage' (after Deleuze and Guattari 1987) becomes the new object, and 'the locus of agency is always the human-nonhuman working group' (pxvii). Bennett also recognises the role of chance or serendipity ('fortuity'), and attunement ('a certain anticipatory readiness on my in-side') in the force of an encounter when writing

[22] Latour (2005, pp12-13) locates the etymological origins of the word 'thing' in '*ding*' (old German), and finds early senses of the word include 'meeting' and 'matter'; concern as well as inanimate objects.

about her assemblage called ‘Debris’; fortuity and attunement contribute to the ‘appearance of thing-power’ (Bennett 2010, p5). This thinking resonates with Sara Ahmed’s articulation of the role of hap/ chance and the conditions/ angle of arrival to an encounter-event as part of its idiosyncratically affective force.

Ultimately, the affective assemblage is key to distributed affect or enhanced agency. The human-nonhuman assemblage of participants—‘memories, intentions, contentions, intestinal bacteria, eyeglasses, and blood sugar’—is ‘an animal-vegetable-mineral-sonority cluster with a particular degree and duration of power’ (2010, p23). Thus, for Bennett, encounters become ‘encounters with lively matter’ (2010, p122), and with her explicit aim to unsettle and reframe the term ‘object’, her *vital object* is a human-nonhuman assemblage of things and/ in lively encounters. This heterogeneous assemblage is one made and perceived by fortuity (chance) but also one that becomes available or perceived by an anticipatory openness—or attunement to the possibility of such ‘vital materialism’ or the vibrancy of (formerly conceived ‘inert’, ‘dead’) matter or ‘inanimate’ objects.

Although Bennett’s vital materialism has been allied with object-oriented ontology (OOO) in the expanded contemporary field of Speculative Realism, the account of the object in OOO is very different (Bryant et al. 2011; Morton 2013a, 2013b). For instance, Harman (2010, 2011) frames the object as an eternal form impervious to interpretations of meaning, the historical context of its emergence, or its effects on a participant-beholder in encounter. It continually ‘withdraws’ from these relations—it resists—human perceptions (Sheldon 2015). In this withdrawn object, all relationality is confined internally as a type of energising engine that ensures autonomy— the object remains largely unchanged as a thing by the variable interpretations of meaning it might attract as an object in encounter. Whether an object is deemed to be affective/ generative to me as an artist-researcher, or not, is of no consequence in the OOO account of the object. The object is impervious to the contingency of relationality. It exists as form, and matter/ materiality is ejected as irrelevant to its constitutive properties. Only form can be physically apprehended—touched—and it is at this scale that the object ‘works’ (Sheldon 2015). Yet, as I have claimed in my account in Chapter Two, the Round Table postcard is a particular image-object that exists—and has survived—only because of the affective relationality that historically connected sender, recipient and a clutch of intergenerational beholders who were also in their own ways receptive to affective intensities animated by it: they kept it safe, this force-fielding postcard, in a special box and handed it on with its fragment of story in purposeful material

and oral transmission. The postcard has accrued different meanings and value over time, and its material features and properties are entangled with this. It is a powerful affective trigger to me, and from this relational energy exchange, it lives on and will be kept-safe as a material-affective catalyst of movement, of intra-familial, intergenerational connection, of unsettling questions of emplacement/ displacement/re-emplacement/ be-longing, and of creative potential actualised in multiple, unplanned and unpredictable ways in my research trace.

Bennett's embrace of the encounter and intra-assemblage relations as integral to the project of her new object, is what, for me, keeps her new assemblage-objects 'alive', animated, internally open and in flux, and generative as a concept for creative use. She expands my thinking about what an object might be, without jettisoning the potentiality springing from the forces of encounters *within* such a buzzing assemblage, and in which my own differentially attuned responses are always at play.

But a doubling of my interest in reflecting on Bennett's (2010) approach is its rich ecological thinking and syntax: to me, her vital assemblage is also strikingly invocative of the daily entanglement of a field ecologist immersed, encountering and cognisant of fluid ambiguities in nonhuman-human relations in ecological spaces. I also note that my introduction to the shared language of the 'assemblage' was firstly via theory and practice in modern ecology, in which an *ecological assemblage* is comprised of all the (nonhuman) species in a prescribed site, whether a regional-scale landscape or a patch of remnant vegetation. Tracking, naming and mapping bespoke patterns of presence and absence across space and time is the daily ground-truthing work of scientific field practice with the aim to name and characterise ecological assemblages of coexisting plants and animals and their intra/ inter-relations. A mode of synsensorial attunement to singularities and fleeting interconnections, to embodied, immersive encountering, observing, close looking and listening, following leads of intuition and, ultimately, thinking about situated, resilient and ephemeral assemblages, is precisely what the practices of field ecology engender. And, it is this intersectional groundwork that has infused and 'infected' (to use Bennett's word) my practice with ceramic objects and photo-images, and which still vitally informs this push-pull passage of inquiry around affect, objects and atmospheres sparked by postcard_*affectus*.

Indeed, for me, Bennett does offer another resounding chime of insight and conviction:

> [Baruch] Spinoza's theory of bodies and their affective encounters can and does inspire ecological thinking today (Bennett 2010, p118).

En route in this processual research trace, I move to couple affection (*affectio*) with the ecophilosophical concept of Shadow Places (Plumwood 2008) to compose an eco-affective response to the contemporary port place of the Round Table postcard (Chapter Six). I read Bennett's words two years after commencing that particular eco-affective trace, as I name it, but they delivered an affirming nod to follow my seemingly speculative, yet intuitively energised and affect-entangled trajectory as one of 'right fit' creative and critical potential. This is also the generative work of an affective object encounter.

Reflecting more on the word and cross-disciplinary meanings attending the assemblage, at this juncture I move to introduce the word-concept *ensemblage*, after the theorist of affect, artist and psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger (2004). Ettinger uses 'ensemblage' to articulate another type of affective assemblage: the psychic-aesthetical net of becomings of an 'encounter-event', whereby the ensemblage is 'woven through encounter, wrapped with affects and memory traces' (2004, p91). I draw on and interlace Ettinger's insights into my trace in more detail in Chapter Eight. But here, I want to flag my adoption of her lexical creation to refer to *new ensembles of pulses and pauses* composed in the research-compositional passage of postcard_*affectus*. For example, the inter-material/media assemblage *Archive Place (Twilight)*, presented next in Chapter Four, is an ensemblage.

The word carries and extends, to my thinking, the (machinic) assemblage of Deleuze and Guattari, which arguably is always affect-entangled. It nods to Bennett's energetically buzzing affective assemblage of the vital object, and it both carries and makes a distinction ('wrapped in affects') from an immediate allusion to the ecological assemblage of scientific fieldwork and thinking still active in my imagination and memory.[23]

[23] One other dimension of questioning sparked for me this during this interlude of review concerns the physiology, or the biology, of affect. Protevi (2011) initiates discussion on this. A new *intermezzo* space for a-bodying—a meeting of philosophy, phenomenology and physiology—is perhaps one both Spinoza and Deleuze would countenance. But this is an engendered line of flight to be followed well beyond this research project.

3.9 Conclusion: Behind and Ahead

Affect has acquired a pluriverse of meanings in its transdisciplinary reach in contemporary theory and scholarship. In the unfolding passage of theoretical review and speculation of this chapter, I came to reference and draw on the Spinozan-Deleuzian philosophical trajectory of *affectus*/ *affectio* to open out space to think about possible becomings in a creative or compositional pathway—whereby an affective encounter might be traced in a language of processual passage, doings and becomings, fine-grained textures and haecceities of compositions. Seeded was a creative-scholarly modality that attends to and composes from the encounter, *as well as* the passage of its forces and intensities. Tracing the generative spark and movement of the provocation in a compositional pathway of doings and becomings (and later *undoings*), is the *affective trace* articulated in response to the postcard encounter, and along which my thesis travels.

Affective attunement and the situated circumstances of the encounter came to the fore in my unpicking of the idiosyncratic and multifaceted intensity of the impingement of the Round Table postcard meeting. In digging into ideas of affective objects, I moved from nascent thinking about 'portal objects' (objects as portals to place in an art-based response to a hyper-local place), to canvas insights and intersectional thinking from scholarship on 'somatic objects' and 'vital objects'. Tracing theoretical work on 'affective atmospheres' was tied to my thinking about how to conceive, translate or render the immersive power of an 'atmosphere' as an artist-maker. Through this, an ineffable yet tangible sphere of feeling-tones particular to the affective working of an idiolocal(e) became another place haecceity: nebulous yet capable of being a-bodied (incorporated, carried, in play), as affective energy that may find its way into new artworks, in unexpected, non-representational ways. Moving with and from the terminology of the assemblage and the affective assemblage, I have come to adopt the word-concept 'ensemblage' (after Ettinger 2004) to refer to ensembles of new artworks composed and exhibited during the passage of research.

The theoretical tracings I have undertaken and speculated on in this review chapter infuse, inform and co-compose the expanded trace of postcard_*affectus* and its becomings, behind and ahead. In the next chapter, I enter the inner archive of the Round Table postcard, the Archive at #57, to begin to compose new material/ immaterial responses to my affective place.

Figure 4.1. Louise Boscacci, *Archive Place (Twilight)*, 2012.
Exhibition detail: porcelain postcards, photoshards and empirica on a custom round light table; the illuminated circle diameter is 60 cm.

Chapter Four

To the Archive

> [A]ll time is a now-time. The past is the future (Patricia Grace in Trinh 1996, p88).
>
> I'd have to be really quick/ to describe clouds—a split second's enough for them to start being something else (Wislawa Szymborska in Dyer 2005, p181).

What might an object do; undo? What might a movement become? Postcard_*affectus* led me to a larger intrafamilial, intergenerational collection of historical and vintage photographs, photocards and collected idiolocal ephemera that housed the Round Table postcard. I named this the Archive at #75: an expanded, inner trove that contextualised the material survival and carriage of this co-travelling century-old image-object.

My introduction to this archive quickly catalysed an idea and its questions: Might this larger archive of photographic ephemera, and the intensities and forces already set into motion, also be the route of a tangential response to the affective idiolocal place? Another vital way to render a creative response from objects, process and atmosphere: this 'private' encountering translated into a new encounter ensemblage composed from the studio becomings of the material archive of the Round Table postcard. What if? Could I begin with my recent vocabulary of practice engaged and energised by the nexus of porcelain-light-photography and let it meet these objects? But, more, let it meet the transient immateriality of the virtual affect of encounter and atmosphere. Let it meet this enveloping sphere of lingering affective attunement beginning with this inner sanctum, this materially ephemeral collection created and maintained *in situ* by many hands.

This chapter describes and reflects on the creative and investigative response to this archive as a tangential affective place response: one that began, not with the outer landscape, but with these ephemeral objects of other interconnected family members, known and not known to me, and which resonated as renditions and fleeting expressions of idiolocal witness, connection and affective emplacements. I expand on the process of working with the photographic archive, its doings and becomings from the archive room to material and

visual studio explorations, incorporating innovation with light and a solar electricity unit developed for use in the illumination of porcelain materiality.

Seeded and in conversation with this making was a scholarly imaginary that intertwined an exploration of (1) the archive in contemporary arts and cross-disciplinary theoretical literature where I pause to focus and reflect on the Derridean archive, (2) the conceptual-poetic possibilities of recent material cultures scholarship on affective atmospheres (as discussed in Chapter Three), and (3) an emergent thematic refrain of 'twilight', as a metaphor for the fleeting zone between remembering and forgetting (Huyssen 1995) alongside actual-experiential twilight excursions beyond the Archive at #75.

In this chapter, I trace and discuss the coalescence of this passage of making-thinking in the exhibition ensemblage *Archive Place (Twilight),* 2012. From the studio process that continued after the exhibition, I reflect on the emergence of the vocabulary of the *porcelain photoshard* and the *photo-ostracon* as part of the impact of the creative push of postcard_*affectus* in practice. In this introductory section, I also want to flag a digital slideshow of imagery that visually traverses the unfolding passage of studio research and composition presented in this chapter; the slideshow is accessible in the thesis portfolio as: *To_the_Archive_Passage_2011-2014*.ppsx.

4.1 The Derridean Archive

In the early stages of approaching and thinking about the private photographic archive, I undertook a scoping review of literature on the nature of the archive as a recurring trope in western thought and contemporary visual art. The full review is found in Appendix D. From this, the resonant philosophical insights of Jacques Derrida were drawn into the compositional passage of working with the Archive at #75.

The first archives in western culture were associated with the domestic home. But not any domicile. As Derrida (1998) has excavated, the word 'archive' is derived from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, who ruled the ancient Greek city-states. Derrida observes that the concept of the archive also shelters in itself the memory of the name *arkhē*, from which he derived two meanings: the 'commencement' and the 'commandment'. The *arkhē,* as Derrida indicates, refers to 'in this place' (1998, p1) where things begin, conjoining two meanings: the

physical, historical or ontological principle of where things commence; and the principle according to law, '*in this place* from which *order* is given' (1998, p1), or where authority and social order are exercised. Thus, the archons who housed the documents and legal records of the city-state's operations were the first guardians of such kept-safe collections, and they alone had the power to interpret the archives.

Derrida's philosophical and imaginative ruminations on the nature of the archive were also catalysed in the sphere of a particular house: the former family home and extensive object collection of psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, now a public museum, the Freud Museum, in London. What Derrida's imaginative scholarship illuminated in the course of working with the intergenerational photographic Archive at #75 was a rethinking of the archive before me less as static repository and more as process. Derrida's transient-actual archive-of-dust struck chiming resonance with the thread of affect and affectivity that energised my own research and its compositional push, pull and becomings.

Derrida's archive is one of both *impression* and the *imprint*:

> In the instant when the imprint is yet to be left, abandoned by the pressure of the impression. In the instant of the pure auto-affection, in the indistinction of the active and the passive, of a touching and the touched (1998, p98).

Here, the impression is 'pure auto-affection'. The imprint is that which is produced as a material, physical composition. The archive, in this thinking, is the virtual transience of affect *and* its generative movement towards the actualised making of the imprint—the object of the material archive. An archive that is both impression and imprint is acutely resonant of the language of the movement of affective impingement and its becomings in artistic response. It invokes connection with Spinozan-Deleuzian affect and Deleuze's philosophical-practical ethology of becomings, both key animators of the creative modality I proposed at the outset in my trace of postcard_*affectus*. Derrida suggests that the final imprint, the externalised material composition, is only the *residue* of any archive. That an archive is process. Towards this understanding, Derrida invokes the modern mythological creation of the 'the mid-day ghost', Gradiva, the woman who walks (Derrida 1998, p98). Gradiva's singular footstep, poised in its forward lift, before it is imprinted into a ground of ash, is Derrida's 'impression':

> When the step is still one with the subjectile. In the instant when the printed archive is yet to be detached from the primary impression in its singular, irreproducible, and archaic origin. In the instant when the imprint is yet to be left, abandoned by the pressure of the impression. *In the instant of the pure auto-affection, in the indistinction of the active and the passive, of a touching and the touched … [a]n archive without archive …* (1998, pp97-8; emphasis added).

What is not visible and tangible (as in a printed document, a photograph, a handwritten postcard, a new porcelain shard, for example) is the impression: the virtual affective push that catalyses a-bodied, creative movement towards the thinking-making of the imprint. What remains as a collection of photographs tended and shared as valuable objects of familial connection and idiolocal place witness is only one part of the cache of the Archive at #75: it is also a potent trove of affective energy and movement externalised and handed on, proffered for (future) living others to encounter and re-encounter.

Paradoxically, and usefully, the archive has a *poor* memory of the past: it is 'hypomnesic' and 'will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of said memory' (1998, p11). Thus, Derrida's archive inherently incorporates and valorises forgetfulness—'the archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself'—so that it both *remembers and forgets*. Forgetting is not only an unavoidable feature of memory, it is a necessary and desirable one. Towards this proposition, he recalls Freud's Mystic [Writing] Pad, *den Wunderblock*, 'this *exterior*, thus archival, model of the *psychic* recording and memorization apparatus ...' (1998, p19), on which an inscription is made and magically erased, allowing re-inscription: the iterative externalised process of remembering and forgetting inherent in the nature of memory, and in the making and translation of an archive. Moreover, Derrida (2010, p15) adds, '(w)hat I attempted to say about this [*Wunderblock* process], a long time ago, about writing, also concerned photography'. A photograph remembers as a framed instance only. It selectively remembers a framed moment; it forgets everything else.

Ultimately, for Derrida, the archive is about the future: 'The archive has always been a pledge, and like every pledge [gage], a token of the future' (1998, p18) because 'only the living answer' (1998, p110). In my processual, creative translation of an archive arrived at

in a passage of *affectus*/ *affectio*, this is a salient reminder about the rich potential of interpretive openness as an artist-researcher:

> For while an archive may not be an end, it is only a beginning. It is not *the* beginning, and it never contains its own beginning. It can only be a translation of its conception (Derrida 1998, p109).

4.2 The Archive at #75

The Archive at #75 is a multigenerational familial collection, gathered, accrued, tended, sorted, annotated, housed in safe-keeping in the extremes of tropical weather, and selectively shared, ruminated on, questioned, and intended for exchange, discussion, witness, and the intergenerational passage of family lore and idiolocal North Queensland knowledge. The earliest photographs are Townsville commercial studio photographs of Ellen Carroll and her sister Maria Carroll dated at 1875, the year of their arrival; these are cabinet cards embossed with the names of the Townsville photographic studios and photographers. The archive holds historical, disintegrating, fading photographic albums of the early 20th century and boxes of loose photographs, photographic negatives (silver/gelatin, cellulose film) and photographic postcards ('Real Photo postcards') from the 1910s and 1920s. It includes a carefully composed and hand-annotated album by my then teenage mother, Mary E. Boscacci, from 1945 to 1948. It extends to a large continuous collection of black-and-white developed-out prints from the 1950s and the start of my mother's own new family collection of colour snapshots and colour positive transparencies (mounted 'slides') composed by herself and by other family members such as my prolific amateur photographer aunt, Joan M. Ruffle, and uncle, John F. (Jack) Ruffle, a professional commercial photographer.

A selective array of the broad range of loose photographs in the Archive is depicted in Figure 4.2. They range in size from tiny matchbox-sized (4 x 4.5 cm) to postcard-sized prints. These are mostly silver/gelatin black-and-white developed-out 'contact' (1:1 scale) positives from Kodak cellulose film negatives (photographs five to ten). The older prints are more variable in origin and technique; for instance, photograph three is a home studio

positive at scale from a silver/gelatin dry plate (glass) negative.[1] The archival prints carry imagery in varying stages of fade, discolouration, and complete disappearance. They are the products of commercial studio photographers (the cabinet card of photograph one), but most are the framings of enthusiastic family photographers. Lewis O'Farrell, my great-uncle, had a series of cameras (dry plate and cellulose roll film negative types) and an improvised home darkroom for his own printing-out/ developing-out photography from about 1918. Popular, affordable Kodak Brownie box cameras were acquired and used by my grandmother from the late 1920s to the early 1930s, and by my mother as a teenager from the mid-1940s (M.E. Boscacci, pers. comm., April 2011). This is just a sample of the collective gatherings and compositions of a family group of keen amateur photographers, avidly engaged with the aesthetics of photographic witness and documentation. They kept up to date with new accessible photographic technologies evidenced by the prodigious, continuous record of prints (contact scale, and selected enlargements), the early adoption of new photographic—'Real Photo'—postcards (a dated 1915 card, item four in Figure 4.2, for example), and the purchase over decades of new affordable roll film camera series—manufactured by the Eastman Kodak and Agfa photographic companies—for personal use.

But, from the outset, I viewed this collection almost as an archeological find—a large repository of material, ephemeral shards of local emplacement that mostly cover a chronological timespan from the mid-1890s to the late 1940s, and into the early 1960s before colour film transparencies and prints came to predominate. It is a private archive of ephemera, much of it very fragile as paper-based prints in varying degrees of material deterioration and pictorial disappearance. (The smaller accompanying trove of cellulose film negatives dating from the late 1920s remains unexplored). I valued it as a private, that is, intrafamilial, intergenerational collection, accrued, kept-safe, sifted, sorted, annotated, shared, discussed, and lying in wait for more than a century. It is an archive rendered and curated by eye and hand, made, and made available, for a succession of curious, unpredictably invested new eyes and hands to encounter, and re-encounter.

[1] The terminology I am using in reference to photographic negatives and positive prints follows Valverde (2009).


POST CARD
CORRESPONDENCE
ADDRESS ONLY
KODAK
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Figure 4.2 A representative array of original photographs and 'real photo' postcards in the Archive at #75, dating from circa 1900 to 1957.

1. 'Bridget Bourke', Townsville photographic studio Lacey & Co., card-mounted, black-and-white positive with studio name in embossed lettering along base, ca.1900, 5.5 x 9.5 cm.

2. 'Norrie and Kate Clair, Liscannor, Ireland', 1912, black-and-white silver/albumen (?) positive print (faded), 8 x 10.5 cm. Irish photographer/ source not recorded.

3. 'Mary Margaret O'Farrell, Flinders Street, West Townsville', 1918, home studio positive print from silver/gelatin dry plate (glass) negative by Lewis O'Farrell, 8 x 10 cm.

4. Real Photo postcard, Kodak process, (verso), Townsville, 1915, 8.5 x 13.5 cm.

5. 'Mary Margaret and Jack Ruffle', West End interior, Townsville, c.1924, 6.9 x 11.3 cm, silver/gelatin contact-scale positive from cellulose film negative; photographer Lewis O'Farrell.

6. 'Mary E. Ruffle on the Townsville Common', 1932, 5.5 x 8 cm, silver/gelatin contact-scale positive from Kodak Brownie box camera cellulose roll film negative; photographer Mary Margaret Ruffle.

7. 'Shaw Street Townsville backyard', 1932, 5.5 x 8 cm, silver/gelatin contact-scale positive from Kodak Brownie box camera cellulose roll film negative; photographer Mary Margaret Ruffle.

8. 'Jack Snr. and Jack Jnr. at Mount St. John Zoo, Bohle, Townsville', ca.1933, 6 x 8.5 cm, silver/gelatin contact-scale positive print from cellulose roll film negative. Photograph attributed to Mary Margaret Ruffle.

9. Three small faded photographic prints (contact scale silver/gelatin positives), Magnetic Island, North Queensland, 1950, each 4 x 4.5 cm. Photographs attributed to Joan M. Ruffle and Mary E. Ruffle.

10. '21 Shaw Street, West End', Townsville, 1957, contact-scale silver/gelatin positive, 6 x 6 cm; photographer Joan M. Ruffle.

[*The coin is a modern AUD $1.00*]

4.3 Working with the Affective Archive

4.3.1 *In situ* Research and Photographic Scanning Processes

I came to concentrate selectively on the historical and vintage black and white photographic prints—these delicate, deliciously synsensorial, ephemerally fragile image-objects—from the turn of the 20th century to the late 1940s and early 1960s (circa 1963). But a chronological framing is a false one. This was not my guide. What was? What was I looking at? For? Why did I eventually select the photographic prints and images I did? As an artist, I was invested in working intuitively, aesthetically, quickly and slowly, letting the lingering in the mind's eye overnight imagery do its work without over-critique, letting the 'haunting' emerge with the dawn, allowing myself be drawn to some and not others. This is the work—the movement and creative energetics—of affect. And to affectivity as my guide, I went. Without knowing 'all' in advance, I responded to the pull and push of photographs as images to the eye and objects in the hand; as poignant image-objects and their aesthetic possibilities, and secondarily, in the vein of familial narrative—the who, where, when, why. My guide, as sparked and illuminated by the Round Table postcard encounter, was affect—new pulses of movement with these photo-pauses.

I began to look at eyes and hands. I sought hyper-local sites recognisable, familiar, suggestively possible but long gone, idiolocal Currumbilbarra-Townsville-torrid-zone-Dry-&-Wet prods of architecture, landed haecceities, characteristic light and shadow plays, a backdrop framed, a fleeting gesture caught in quick response to a fleeting moment, a perceived composition of presence and the one-day-only *ephemeros*. I roamed, tactilely and visually. I sifted, sorted, gathered, zoomed into enlarged pixellated screen images, pondered, asked other older family members about individual photographs, ruminated on, discussed and speculated about many others with my mother, this archive's curator and story-keeper.

Over four week-long research trips (2011–12), I systematically explored and worked with the archival collection *in situ*. Central to this was the creation of a high-resolution (300dpi and 600 dpi) digital archive of selections of this large collection for use in subsequent studio processes, described below. This systematic scanning work was also a particularly useful research tool, allowing tiny photographic images, often damaged or fading, to be digitally zoomed into via the computer screen in order to actually examine them. This method frequently illuminated new details not visible to the naked eye, and in the working

array in focus, enabled individuals and local sites to be identified where doubt existed. Newly scanned digital photos were able to be ported on a laptop and shown as enlarged screen images in consultations with older family members almost immediately during each scanning trip, and this fresh outreach prompted new recall of details of who, where, when and personal or family lore associated with the occasion or place framed.

For example, in my encountering, a co-traveller of the Round Table postcard as a seminal co-provocateur in the archive was a tiny, leaf-thin 5.5 x 8 cm photograph reproduced at scale in Figure 4.3, and titled in this research: *Commons Party*, 1932.

Figure 4.3. *Commons Party*, 1932.
Archival photograph, 5.5 x 8 cm. Black-and-white 1:1 positive print from cellulose roll film negative. Photographer: Mary Margaret Ruffle (May 1932).

It records an extended family gathering in the old Town Common (‘the Common’), the contemporary Townsville Town Common Environmental Park on the northern edge of the city, a now remnant mosaic of original coastal wetland and woodland. I return repeatedly to this affective locale in the compositional passages of this thesis, but on this occasion, present are my mother, Mary, as a two-year child (standing, front centre) and my grandfather John Ruffle (squatting, right, holding a teapot with the running board of the vehicle holding a collection of tea cups to his left). Other group members are aunts and uncles (children), a great-aunt, a great-uncle and a cousin. Until this scanning work, it was assumed that the woman, left, seated and leaning against the tree with the freshwater lagoon behind her, was Mary Margaret Ruffle (O’Farrell), my grandmother, the teenage addressee of the Round Table postcard. However, having access to the enlarged pixellated screen

image, being able to zoom into the photograph at a new level of visual detail, revealed that this is not her. After eighty years, it became evident that 'Maggie' (now an older 'Mag' to familiars) was the photographer who composed the image and documented this group. This revelation was corroborated by a follow-up interview with my elderly aunt Joan Ruffle who was present as a child. My working procedure of scanning, examining, and quickly 'repairing' digitised photographic images *in situ* with Photoshop software became an effective research tool. It facilitated collaborative witness and shared lore from other family members, but it also became a powerful method of virtual re-encounter into local sites that had been photographed in the early decades of the preceding century, and now lay just beyond the archive scanning room.

Scanned Archival Photographs to Final Photographic Transfer Prints

After the initial scanning periods, a working group of images was selected, and reworked digitally with Photoshop in preparation for next stage printing as ceramic photographic transfer prints. This was a process of making selective croppings and extractions of images, enlargements of the original-scale scans, and variable amounts of additional digital repair where the fading of a favoured photograph, in particular, meant it would not be successful in transfer to ceramic forms. This process was new and exploratory to begin with, a time-rich and labour-intensive period of testing and retesting to establish parameters of darkness and contrast, for instance, in order for archival images to 'work' as final illuminated photo-porcelains.

4.3.2 Ceramic Studio Processes: Investigating Paper Porcelain and Photographic Transfer Prints

Essential to this research and composition was an empirical ceramic studio investigation. My intention, extending from new directions in practice, was to explore the material possibilities and limits of paper porcelains in thin rolled sheets as carriers of digital ceramic transfer photographic prints. As introduced, my aim was to explore the potential of this material vocabulary and its nexus with light/ illumination—what it might become—in affective response to the Archive at #75.

What is meant by 'digital ceramic transfer photographic prints' is this: high-resolution digitised photographic images printed with ceramic 'toners' or 'inks' (powdered ceramic pigments) by new generation laser ceramic printers. The prints are transferred to vitreous ceramic surfaces and fired onto them in a third kiln firing during the ceramic studio process.

These are also referred to as digital ceramic decals. In, the case of the present research, the photographic transfer prints are melted onto and into the heat-softened glazed skins of translucent paper porcelain. They become an embedded layer of the ceramic fabric, not a surface add-on. By the time I began exploring these techniques in 2010, twenty-first century advances in ceramic laser printers meant that high-resolution transfer prints were newly achievable using one's own digital 300 or 600 dpi photographic images; these are also referred to as custom decals.

I had been introduced to the history of English ceramic transfer printing in a research-based Australia Council for the Arts London studio residency in 2009–2010 (Acme Studios 2012; Boscacci 2010). This tradition, and its technical evolution, has most closely been associated with the English decorative tableware industry (Scott 2012; Freeman 1977). In Staffordshire, northern England, as part of the first British Ceramics Biennial in 2009, I was able to handle and examine contemporary manifestations of utilitarian ceramics made with transfer prints produced by the new digital laser printing technologies. The artistic possibilities for photographic imagery came to mind then, sparked by a long time interest in practice in the nexus of ceramics and photography, and subsequently, in translucence, photography and atmosphere. Whilst in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, I sourced a small firm that produced a printed aesthetic that retained the nuanced qualities of vintage black and white photographs. I initially accessed this and another English printer to produce transfer prints used in this research, before switching to a local Australian company that had newly acquired equivalent printing qualities with laser printers to commercially produce high-resolution photographic decals.

An extended studio program to resolve the technical aspects of successfully applying and firing the photographic transfers was undertaken. This was an empirical process of repeated trial and error to resolve and fine-tune successful techniques, and to progressively increase the scale of both porcelain forms and photographic images with which to work. The maximum photographic decal print size available by contemporary laser printers for ceramics is A3 (29.7 x 42 cm). Firing-on kiln work was an added stage of unpredictability; each glazed and variably textured or embossed surface (equivalent to, but fundamentally unlike, the emulsion of a photographic paper) produced different material and visual effects, and it was necessary to resolve a final ceramic 'palette' of printing glazes.

At the same time, I commenced an extended investigation of paper porcelain as a raw

working material, seeking to explore its potential as a thin-sheeted fabric, and establish a feasible upper limit of scale for handling and kiln-firing flat sheets to temperatures around 1300^{o} Celsius. This was a radically different proposition to the rounded, upright, enclosed vessels and objects that had been the staple of my exhibition practice to that juncture. But an early focus in my ceramics education and exhibition history had been to innovate with paper clays, and this studio investigation with paper porcelains was usefully informed by bespoke technical solutions previously achieved (Boscacci 2001b). Paper porcelain is a shorthand term for porcelain paper clay, made by adding paper pulp to the clay body. In this research, I used Southern Ice porcelain paper clay with about one percent paper pulp (Clayworks Australia, pers. comm., April 2015).[2] The long fibres of cellulose from the pulp intermesh with and bind the clay platelets into a more plastic, less brittle, less fragile, forming material. This paper content confers additional raw strength to notoriously fragile clay forms in their dried unfired state, especially to raw porcelain bodies when worked into thin, large, rolled sheets. The firing process 'burns out' the cellulose fibres from the clay fabric, leaving the new ceramic material internally perforated with small air spaces and, consequently, much lighter. This material 'lighten-ing' of weight in the final, high-fired vitreous fabric without loss of translucency was a combination of properties I sought for making wall-hung porcelain works.

I began with a version of Round Table postcard format (10 x 15 cm) as a means to begin to empirically explore and resolve the ceramic processes of working with thin sheets of paper porcelain and photographic transfers. The raw porcelain body was thinly rolled by hand and cut to this template form. The approach was progressively extended to other formats: 10 x 8 inch photographic porcelain renditions, and circle and oval framings observed in the backgrounds of the original vintage photographs of the archive. Increasingly, I began to experiment with large scale rollings and active manipulations of paper porcelain onto a collection of hyper-local, familiar Currumbilbarra objects such as lengths of old lace window curtains, offcuts of aged cotton fabric recovered from storage cupboards, and strips of finely-gauged corrugated iron that once sheeted sections of the back walls of a familial Queenslander house. Other mark-making processes from my vocabulary of ceramics practice, such as diamond-point engraving with passages of handwritten text extracted from research trip diaries, textural embossings and other manipulations of the plastic, responsive clay body, accompanied these new trials. The ceramic-photographic material research was

[2] Southern Ice Porcelain (Clayworks Australia), developed by Tasmanian ceramist Les Blakebrough in the 1990s (Holmes 2005), has been deployed in my practice since 2003.

primarily completed in my own studio. In order to accommodate the largest experimental paper porcelain forms, a large, disused trolley kiln at Sturt, the Centre for Australian Contemporary Craft and Design in Mittagong, New South Wales, was repaired and used for a suite of high temperature porcelain firings in 2012. Technical innovations developed for firing large flat porcelain sheets that soften, warp, slump and heat-stick to shelves at peak kiln temperatures are beyond the ambit of this thesis description, but this extension in scale was only possible with solutions developed by an experimental approach during the unfolding studio investigation.

What cannot be described in technical detail, as much of that above has been, is another dimension of working with the photographic transfer process adopted in the studio. The process is *also* a delicate handling of a skin-like preparation of a digitised image derived from an aged photographic impression-imprint, recomposed and sent away for printing by other hands, then returned and printed onto a vitreous clay 'body' with high heat. Here, I realise, is the continuing passage of the *ephemeros* of gesture, impulse and affective response that is 'invisible' in the making act yet intimately feeds and infuses its becomings.

4.4 Why Porcelain? Why Porcelain and Light?

In this section, my aim is to reflect on the material vocabulary adopted in this first compositional cycle of response via the questions: Why porcelain? Why porcelain and light? In tandem, and beyond the immediate preoccupation and productions of practice leading into this research trace, I want to trace out multiple threads of my affective-formal engagement with this ceramic materiality for more than a decade. This will explain why I turned to it in response to the Archive at #75.

In the context of my 2006 exhibition *Return: Porcelain, Time, Light, Loss*, I wrote of porcelain's carriage of multiple histories and associations to my contemporary practice on an ancient continent:

> Porcelain carries a backpack of history to this continent of contradictions. Long established in the cultures of China and Korea, it also totes its dark, enthralling origin in Europe with Böttger's captive experimentation towards an arcanum for 'white gold'. In a relatively brief time, the fickle paste led to factory output for porcelain collecting to ceiling-high excess by European gentry, in turn gently

> satirised by makers such as Meissen's Johann Kaendler. Porcelain does not let me forget this, here, southern hemisphere, 21C, whether handling buttery Limoges, Les Blakebrough's austral arcanum of 'Ice', or mixing it with paper pulp derived, at least in part, from contested remnant forests (Boscacci 2007, p62).

In 2009, of the impulses and movement behind the exhibition *Beaker Culture*, I was impelled to try to express the affectivity of small encounters with sunlit porcelain vessels:

> The porcelain ash beakers have come to be the most articulate 'markers' of this old Woonjeegaribay spot of the Gundungurra nation, in what is now more commonly called the Southern Highlands Wingecarribee, a hemisphere away from the Irish gathering. They catch and release the brilliant clarity of highland light, the intense seasonality of its qualities, its abundance and its complementary, lingering absence over winter months. They have become my light catchers as much as any other function. They ask to be watched, picked up and held to early, unbruised light, or the warmed, low, south-of-west late spring sun that shafts through doorway and window in October and November. Sometimes, this action takes my breath away—the fluid synthesis of light, nuanced colour, and layered translucence into a new, unexpected and impermanent dance. A momentary stilled movement. Just momentary, a collection of breaths, before the earth rotates a little more and the sun and the light move with it. This ephemeral offering from such a permanent substance that is ceramic (Boscacci 2009).

In 2014, I continued to attempt to articulate the pull and push of this tricky, beguiling medium:

> I have been seduced by the medium for more than a decade after moving to set up a studio in the crisp clear chiming light of the Southern Highlands in 2003, and have now made hundreds of works carrying and exploring porcelain's cloudy translucence. Five years ago, I began exhibiting works with light itself—illumination to backlight or infuse the works—and I continue on this (rather addictive) enchantment and its possibilities as a vocabulary in making (Boscacci 2014, p23).

Porcelain is chameleonic. Unlit it can appear cold, stiff, aloofly vitreous in stilled forms. Lit, illuminated from behind, by an angled shaft of sunlight through a window, it comes to life. Light animates porcelain. Not with an eager clarity of response like glass, but with a 'cloudy translucence', a descriptive quality I draw from the Japanese writer Tanizaki's affectionate recall of the confectionery yōkan (Tanizaki 2001, p26). Yet 'cloudy translucence' perfectly describes the milky depths of this human-made ceramic *intermezzo* body of stone-glass, or glassy stone.

Porcelain is a long-lived, variably fragile, frangible material: a ready shard maker, as are all thin ceramic fabrics. Yet, all fired clay, as a material fabric is 'tough' and 'enduring', accounting for its persistence and abundance in the archaeological record across millennia (MacGregor 2010, p55): an ancient clay tablet from 3100–3000 BC Iraq remains readable as one of the earliest examples of writing, even if topically it is 'about beer and the birth of bureaucracy' (MacGregor 2010, p91). Indeed, 'clay has a one huge advantage: it lasts. Unlike the bamboo used by the Chinese to write on, which rots quickly, and unlike paper, which is so easily destroyed' (MacGregor 2010, p91). Very recent archaeological and material science research has established that the oldest pottery finds in China now date to 20,000 years BP (Wu et al. 2012).[3] As with all ceramic fabrics, porcelain is also an excellent time traveller. It carries its cultural origins and intimacies of making and use, even in shattered shard form, across centuries. For instance, the vast 'waste' trove of Kilwa pot shards found on a Tanzanian beach in 1948 included thousands of porcelain fragments; the mixed shards were dated to AD 900–1400 and remained traceable in the 20th century to multiple intercontinental origins in China, Iraq, Oman, India, and local East African sites of production (MacGregor 2010).

Still, porcelain is a relative newcomer to the spectrum of ceramic materiality. The Percival David Collection of Chinese Ceramics in the British Museum, London, holds some of the earliest porcelain forms produced, dating from the 10th century AD in China (Krahl & Harrison-Hall 2009).[4] Well established by the Tang Dynasty (618–906 AD), Chinese porcelain preceded by a thousand years the final breakthrough of making hard paste

[3] From Jiangxi Province, China, these earthenware shards of probable cooking devices predate by 2000 to 3000 years other ancient pottery such as the well-known Japanese Jomon vessels.

[4] As part of a residency in the Australia Council London Studio in 2009–10, I studied the astounding Percival David Collection of Chinese porcelain, and this research also independently informs my understanding of the early development and material history of porcelain.

porcelain in Europe, in Saxony, by the apothecary and alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger between 1711 and 1719 (Burton 1921). In both its Asian and its European histories, imperial control and aristocratic patronage of production have historically conflated the materiality of porcelain with preciousness, wealth, excessive consumption, decorative opulence, elite social status, power and prestige, even though at the same time, aesthetic austerity, ritual, scholarship and wonder have accompanied its histories of use and association in China and Japan (Okakura 2005; Krahl & Harrison-Hall 2009; Cassidy-Geiger 2007).

More so, as I have resolved: '[a] fine porcelain bowl may also commemorate an extinct pig-footed bandicoot' (Boscacci 2001a, p8). My interest in porcelain has been as a contemporary austral artist-maker. As part of my evolving practice, I have used various material properties and associations of ceramics and, latterly, porcelain—tough, fragile, inscribable, plastic-haptic materiality—in conceptual extension. Adding an alternative lilt of meaning to attributions of 'precious', 'high cultural value', 'objects of wealth and social status' to the material mix of 'tough', 'fragile', 'frangible' has been a strategy of creative practice. For example, my Ceramic Archive project begun in 2005, engraves the list of names of extinct and endangered Australian fauna species into simple, large bowls and acid jars able to be picked up and rotated by hands or circumambulated by the whole body.[5] I continue to make new works to update this list materially over time, extending from an early stoneware exemplar such as *Bowl for 264 species*, 2007 (Boscacci 2008b; 2011). *Collecting names*, 2008 (Figure 4.4), a five-piece porcelain group, carries the same species list in fragile 'collecting' bags' hung on the wall, ready to be lifted off and handled, but ultimately the text is only fully revealed and legible in the rounded bases that fit the cupped palm of the hand of a beholder.

[5] I refer to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) List of Threatened Fauna, published and updated regularly by the Australian government (Australian Government Department of the Environment 2015, https://www.environment.gov.au/cgibin/sprat/public/publicthreatenedlist.pl?wanted=fauna).

Figure 4.4. Louise Boscacci, *Collecting names*, 2008.
Engraved porcelain. Five pieces, wall-hung; dimensions variable, max ht. 21 cm, group 220 cm.

In other manifestations of this thinking embedded in objects bound for the gallery marketplace, I have explicitly ascribed high value to a coastal mountain range, a remnant patch of wetland, or a locally disappearing water rat by deliberately using fragile, tough, expensive, culturally-loaded porcelain to make a work *for* them, and in their names. Whenever, and wherever, I use porcelain in practice, this backpack of allusion and intended reference is also variously carried by the final works. But, increasingly, more freely, less culturally and historically bound by the mixed heritage of porcelain transported to the southern hemisphere, more locally referential and invested, is my deep interest in the fleeting play of this human-made material with the ephemeral wave-particle phenomenon of light.

Porcelain is contradictory. Porcelain is chameleonic. It is a long-lived ceramic stone-glass, a long-term memory-material, but one that also can change moment to moment in the presence and vagaries of light. Even if fractured to shards, it carries resilience and playful ephemerality as qualities in a material vocabulary of intrigue and ambiguity. Light is a collaborator, a co-maker, of porcelain's shape-shifter properties that slip between stilled opaqueness and enchanting, at times ethereal, glow. Between hardness and coolness under the touch of fingertips, to an animated, warmed brilliance with the infusion of bright sunlight. Held up to the radiant sunlight outside the comparative dimness of the studio and the dark kiln chamber, a still-warm porcelain beaker, bowl, or card-thin photo print becomes an unexpected encounter of aesthetic pleasure. Inner depths of the glazed skin or hand-marked surface are revealed. What lies under, within, is glimpsed by a slight rotation of the hand or by a subtle turn of one's whole body to follow the fluid shift of the sun's position second by second. What is given are new moments of affective movement, a

synergistic spark, in which the ephemerality and nuanced interplay of light is intimately linked with this new tangible, material offering.

I began this now more-than-a-decade long exploration of porcelain and light interplays and synergies when I relocated from metropolitan Sydney to the Wingecarribee district of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales to establish a new studio base. The brilliant clarity of ambient light at 700 metres above sea level in a temperate, unpolluted rural environment, its abundant presence across the temperate summer months, and its lingering absence over the winter, compelled my creative attention. As an artist-maker, I became a daily light-watcher. One that diverged anew from a previous attunement to the bleaching intensity of intense hot sunlight and the corresponding blackness of cool shadows of the Queensland northern tropics. One already a student of chiaroscuro effects, particularly shadow plays, as a photographer. As an artist-maker of objects and exhibitions, porcelain as a vitreous material sensitive to light, its chiming presence, its lingering absence, its seasonal nuances and fluxes of intensity across the passage of a day, its direct affectivity as an aesthetic element, became a material of focus and investigation that was elaborated into an oeuvre of objects and vessels for galleries. Entwined and informing this work was an empirical, pleasurable (addictive, even) exploration of light + porcelain interplays. This continuum of research has been documented photographically over the decade, forming an evolving visual archive of studio experiment, trace, observation and witness. The exploratory 'pull' of the vocabulary of porcelain-light was also at work most recently in the collaborative project and exhibition, *Cicada Waterfall* 2014, initiated with Australian painter Elisabeth Cummings in 2012 (Boscacci 2014; King Street Gallery on William 2014). This arose as a side-project in the trace of postcard_*affectus* when I began to make large flat porcelain 'pans' in response to return visits to the circular salt-encrusted clay pans of remnant wetlands in the Townsville region. Cummings' responses to my circular translucent forms with semi-abstract brushwork imagery re-make them as a hybrid terrain of our imaginations; they are open co-becomings of emplaced encounters that cannot be located on any map. The ten works, documented photographically in illuminated (backlit) and non-illuminated states, continue and extend this idiosyncratic material-immaterial oeuvre that began with my daily immersion in the stimulating lightscape of the Illawarra highlands (Boscacci 2014; also see online photographic documentation of the collaborative series at http://louiseboscacci.net/2014/06/25/cicada-waterfall-2014/).

In turning to the Archive at #75, I also moved along this trajectory of praxis—my undiminished curiosity in the potential of the material language of long-lived stone-glass in play with intangible yet corpo-real light—to compose a first cycle of studio response. Beginning with the cache of ephemeral image-objects, 'What if?' again became my question. What if I just followed the hunch to use this material-immaterial interplay towards a 'right feel', 'right fit' response? Towards the response presenting in my mind's eye—the inner visualisation, the imagined or foreseen—with the ineffable qualities I now felt and wanted to draw on to infuse new works. As I have described above, this prefiguring also drew in ceramic photo-transfer techniques, but in approaching the Archive at #75 my interest was a translatory response extending from processual and experimental studio work that also asked, 'Is it possible to *materially* translate encounters with the nebulous milieu of an affective atmosphere?' Here, in the studio becomings of the photo archive, I decided to compose with this porcelain and light vocabulary to gather and co-mingle my embodied and emplaced experiences with the metaphorical zone of *twilight*, an emerging theme linking the archive with its outer affective idiolocale.

4.5 Ways of Illuminating: Lighting Research

I have alluded to light as wave and particle (Meis 2015), light as movement and stillness, light as a silent animator of the cloudy translucence of porcelain, and light as an ephemeral collaborator in my creative vocabulary of practice. Accompanying my ceramic studio process was an investigation into lighting sources to resolve ways of making stand-alone illuminated porcelain photographic works. My earlier studio explorations and exhibitions of illuminated porcelain had employed a range of available light boxes and light tables for back-lighting vessel forms (Boscacci 2009, 2011). My intention with flat sheets of porcelain as my focus here was to resolve a series of individually lit, wall-installed works that could be encountered singly or in a group. Over a year, commercially available lightweight, low heat LED light panels were sourced and adapted to compose framed porcelain photographic works, the *lightenings*, discussed in this chapter. As part of this lighting research, a stand-alone solar unit—the *solar trunk*—was developed for use in exhibition installations in and outside gallery spaces (Appendix E). This was deployed in the exhibition *Archive Place (Twilight),* 2012, described below, and provided the sole source of power for light and sound works in the exhibition ensemblage *Pulse-Pause 2013*, described in Chapter Six. A bespoke round light table designed and already in use for light works as part of recent practice was further modified and used in the ceramic studio investigation and in the

exhibition of new works in the unfolding project. It is a visible feature in the photographic documentation presented in this chapter, for example in Figure 4.5, and in the visual passages of the slideshows in the thesis portfolio.

The silver and green is quickening. Radiating light and refracting shimmers.

The room is still, poised.

I am the only one in the house, and in this arc of affectus.

The table is here. And I am standing at the open windows, facing Cudtheringa.

(*Journal waymaker*, 14 July 2011, Currumbilbarra-Townsville)

4.6 Out the Window … to hyper-local twilights of affect … to 'Twilight'

The scanning room faced north towards the granite volcanic plug of Cudtheringa (Castle Hill). Wafting in each day, across the day, as I sat at a ninety-year-old table sorting, selecting, scanning, was the outer *synsensorium* of the hyper-local. The moving passage of bird species heard only by their calls arriving, lingering, departing; the waft of aromas of mangrove and organic-rich salty bay on the north-easterly breeze shivering the curtain diaphanes; the flicker of palm leaves in those same breezes against the green and silver casement window glass panes setting up mesmerising shimmers of coloured light across the day; the visceral rumble and unsettling peaks of industrial traffic from the boom city road close by.

The *affective synsensorium* is the intersectional space in which multiple senses are at work in synthetic and synergistic ways such that a heightened affectivity is experienced. Attunement over a long time preconditions this enhanced reception-perception because subtleties and nuances are also easily registered: flowing syncopations of bird calls all recognisable individually overlain by the rustle of sea breeze through the canopy of a dry season fig tree, intercut with the warm morning aroma of picked frangipani flowers, buzzed by the electric blue flash of a passing *Ulysses* butterfly, pierced by the unmistakeable whistling of a hunting black kite somewhere overhead, out-of-sight … I stress the multisensorial, immersive experience of my encounters, yet this is not enough to articulate the ineffable synergism of the senses in my attuned-to affective place, the affective synsensorium of Currumbilbarra country.

The open north-facing green and silver casement windows pulled me to them, to stand and listen and imbibe again this outer archive. I was impelled to follow that invitation back out into that enlivening synsensorium, and I chose the crepuscular twilight zones at either end of the scanning room day's work to do so. Whilst the heart of the day was given over to working with the Archive at #75, and the systematic research of viewing, selecting, scanning, and examining the digitised photographs, before and after hours were given to return excursions to familiar edgelands, eco-remnants, and old birding haunts in this old-new arc of affect.

The crepuscular, transition zone of twilight occurs at both ends of the day-night exchange. This is at the fluid interchange from cool morning blackness to predawn milk-pink and

grey-hued light that bleaches out into the sudden breakthrough of sun over the Bay waters. And, in the more fleeting late afternoon lumen-zone of golds and purples dropping to the horizon with sunset and the brisk onset of dusky darkness in tropical latitudes. These re-encounters with long-familiar sites being absorbed by periurban creep, sharded and coated with new housing and industrial estates, or overwhelmed by aircraft noise with the first flights of the day shortly after sunrise, became anticipated, intense, ambivalent, passages of return and wit(h)ness.[6] They were twilight occasions in which to walk, pause, watch, listen, wait, imbibe: new encounters with an outer contemporary archive of ephemeral passages of species, light, colour, sound, and serendipitous profferings. An outer archive that juxtaposed and conversed with the inner archive of material ephemera, past wit(h)ness, and affective profferings of the photographic collection.

I resolved quickly, in response to the pull of these twilight encounters, to begin to collect passages of sound (*soundings*) and moving image (digital video passages: *v-pulses*) as haecceities of this idiolocal place that were also forms of mediated wit(h)ness. I did not know in advance how or if they would be incorporated into the project then focused on the photographic-porcelain-light nexus, but I did sense that I needed to follow the insistent inner call to mobilise this new direction as part of an authentic response to affective provocation.

A portable digital sound recorder and a small handheld HD digital camcorder were acquired, and accompanied me along with a digital SLR camera on all occasions. I used the camcorder as a static camera, intentionally setting it on a tripod or, in quick response on a car roof, to collect moving visual passages across the lens and with automatic focus: another sensor eye; but one with a degree of unpredictability as to what would be witnessed and recorded. The fluxes of light, nuances of colour, aerial tracks of birds at twilight were 'watched' by this independent mode, whilst I was able to be fully a-bodied in presence and witness, and to move away from the grounded technology. The name *v-pulse* alludes to this movement recorded by a static video camera. It was initiated by the serendipitous experience in 2011 of being placed beneath the aerial flightway of thousands of Magpie Geese moving at dawn from wetlands south of the city into the Townsville Town Common Environmental Park. As I stood, paused in dawn twilight, repeat pulse waves of vocalising birds flew in, heard before seen, and passed over my head to alight onto the deep freshwater lagoons at my back. After a brief visual and aural pause—several minutes at most—another

[6] After Ettinger (2006b); also see Chapter Eight.

pulse of a vocal aerial formation of geese arrived and passed, tapering in and away in both sound and sight. In between, I paused, listened, awaited their next wave of approach. As the birds flew in and over, I moved with them, following their fluid line of airborne bodies with binoculars and a heightened physical focus. A pulse and a pause rhythm of birds and my own bodily response synchronised. Here was an iteration of the rhythm of postcard_*affectus.* An object and a movement: a pause and a pulse. What can a body do? What can an object do; undo? What might a movement become?

In the affective pull of these old roaming spaces just outside the windows of the archive room, the conscious articulation of *pulse and pause* emerged and immediately fitted a space of ineffability always present in a feeling-forward approach to practice. It entered my research passage as a conceptual refrain, a repeat rhythm of a-bodied encounterings, and a lexical becoming that I embraced and travelled on with in my unfolding trace.

4.7 Soundings and V-pulses

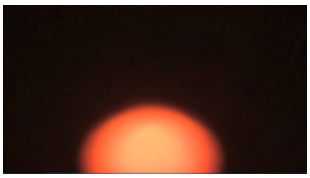
4.7.1 Soundings

Field sound recordings were made with a portable handheld digital sound recorder, a Zoom H4N, with an added directional microphone. Portability and quick set-up allowed rapid response to 'overheard' sound that I wanted to collect. The rig travelled everywhere with me when out in Currumbilbarra country, and was at hand when scanning photographs, *and* listening to the flow of sounds through the open window, in the archive room. A much larger archive of sound recordings than presented here as final renditions was accrued. Sound editing skills using WavePad software were acquired en route as part of this new creative work. The selected soundings of this chapter are aural haecceities that distil a passage of encounters that continue to affectively impinge and re-call me to place: a flow of re-placement across the timespan and geography of encounterings *in situ*.

4.7.2 V-pulses

The digital video camera was used as a static witness for short or long encounters. With the camera set on a small portable tripod on autofocus, I was free to wander away from it to watch and listen nearby. I never knew in advance what might be visually collected when I had left the camera, what might pass by the lens in the timespan of a particular setup at a given location. This was only fully available in after-encounter when uploaded to a travelling laptop.

One unpredictable and serendipitous outcome of this approach was the visual oscillation of the autofocus function in response to fluctuations in light and detected movement. Two passages included in the digital thesis portfolio exemplify this.



In *Pulse 1*, 2011 (Pulse_1.mov), a pronounced in-and out pulse in the image was created by the autofocus responding to the breathing-like oscillations of radiant energy and dispersed light emanating from the gaseous sphere of sun as it emerged above the horizon line of the sea. Attempting to focus on the solar light movement, the technology produced a beat of changing rhythm, first slow, then quickening in pace as a more stable, discrete circle of white light of sun lifted into the sky and the focus of camera. None of this was visible to the naked eye, or in the camera's open viewfinder. But this idiosyncratic visual 'accident' observed in this first video recording also conjured the word 'pulse'—equally solar pulse and the visual effect from the grounded 'somewhere' of my standing place at the edge of remnant city wetlands in a morning twilight session. In *Legacy of the Commons*, 2011, (Legacy_of_the_Commons.mov), another visual rhythmic artifact was created by the auto-focus on the static camera shifting in and out in response to the movement of the upward billowing of the smoke plume of a distant bush fire and the connected play of light from the descending sun in late afternoon. Both of these accidental 'makings' were embraced as fortuitous becomings of the Currumbilbarra twilight encounters.

4.7.3 Final Renditions

Sound and video collected during 2011 and 2012 contemporaneously with the Archive scanning sessions were later edited in the studio. A final collection of digital soundings and v-pulses (HD QuickTime movies) is accessible in the thesis portfolio.

I invite you to go there to play v-pulses and listen to soundings. You may wish to keep listening as you read on. Different combinations of soundings were used in aural loops as part of the exhibition ensemblages *Archive Place (Twilight),* 2012, discussed below, and *Pulse-Pause 2013,* 2013, discussed in Chapter Six. The final work in the sequence of the seven soundings in the portfolio, *Archive Place Passage,* 2011–14 (the file titled ArchivePlace_Passage.mp3) collects the preceding six recordings into a continuous aural passage of encountering.

Final v-pulses are intentionally non-narrative and non-representational passages. I am not attempting to depict or explain or narrate story: they are collectings of visual atmospheric haecceities and encounters of light, colour, hyper-local site, and in one instance, interactions of two local bird species in silhouette. They were resolved first for enlarged projection in four dimensional encounter spaces: directly onto a gallery wall, a long scroll of photographic backdrop paper, and a suspended veil of old lace window curtains from the house of the archive, hung in configurations with lightenings and soundings (Figures 4.8 and 4.9). Enlarged as projections, they become increasingly diffuse and co-create a space with colour and light plays that are idiosyncratic to Currumbilbarra-Townsville country and the Archive at #75. As projections, reminiscent of the evening childhood slideshows of family gatherings, they can be walked up to and into, the viewer covered in colour-and-flicker by, the work momentarily entered and visually altered with the shade of one's own body.

4.8 Affective Atmospheres and Huyssen's 'Twilight'

In Chapter Three, I explored ideas of atmosphere and affective atmospheres derived from strands of material cultures research, aesthetics theory and phenomenology (Anderson 2009). I had arrived at this juncture in asking: What of the ineffable, nebulous, virtual, yet palpably 'real', qualities perceived in this affective place, or even the room of the postcard encounter? How to better understand and articulate the unique 'milieu', ambience, 'feel' of this situated place in a creative response? I have extended this discussion in this chapter by embracing an atmosphere as a haecceity of an affective place that might not so much be 'captured' but 'in-corporated' into new compositions, or come to infuse new objects and ensemblages. In this section, I now extend these discussions with the intersectional theme of twilight.

The temporal zone of ‘twilight’ is used metaphorically by Andreas Huyssen (1995) to describe the fleeting, yet potentially marvellous zone between remembering and forgetting. Whilst his postmodern context is a broader diagnosis of an accelerating western ‘culture of amnesia’ at the end of the 20th century, he writes:

> Twilight memories are both: generational memories on the wane due to the passing of time and the continuing speed of technological modernization, and memories that reflect the twilight status of memory itself (Huyssen 1995, p3).

This is not a nostalgic lamentation for the past, because ‘[t]he temporal status of any act of memory is the present’ (1995, p3); rather, Huyssen links last light to ultimate marvels:

> Twilight is that moment of the day that foreshadows the night of forgetting, but that seems to slow time itself, an in-between state in which the last light of the day may still play out its ultimate marvels. It is memory’s privileged time (1995, p3).

‘Twilight’, the fecund, fleeting transitional zone between remembering and forgetting, resonated with the experience of working with the postcard archive in which many photographic images were literally on the verge of disappearance as aged emulsions had deteriorated and faded, where crumbling paper and card albums were turning into fragments and dust in their protective packets, and where living knowledge about the oldest holdings was also on the cusp of loss as elder family lore holders became fewer in numbers and memories declined.

‘Twilight’ evoked best this shortening temporal zone between the possibility of face-to-face intergenerational transmission and recording of oral lore with family elders who were key archive makers and protectors. In 2013, during this project, Joan M. Ruffle, an aunt of whom I asked many questions regarding her knowledge of obscure local sites, objects, identities, and occasions framed in photographs, and with whom I eventually found and recovered my teenage grandmother’s postcard album, became ill and died. I spent an extended period with her as she declined. The ‘messiness of the experiential’ (Ahmed 2010, p30), and the vital co-working of affect and serendipity, are carried in this allusionary zone of twilight.

Simultaneously, as described earlier, daily twilight became a temporal, luminous, aural zone of immersion. The word ‘twilight’ invokes and carries these atmospheric crepuscular interchanges of late afternoon to evening and predawn to early morning, the excursions to pause, listen, watch, walk, record and photograph in new encounters on the spreading city’s peri-urban edges. Entangled further, ‘twilight’ also came to speak of an eco-affective zone in which once familiar haecceities of coastal savannah plain and granite outcrop and their other-than-human residents, open roaming spaces and bespoke atmospheres in this old affective locus continued to shard and disappear completely under the spread of rapid urban expansion and industrial growth. I pick up this thread when I turn to the eco-affective in creative response in more depth in Chapter Six.

Twilight, thus, became an intersectional theme infused with resonant feeling-tones of the passage of research that unfolded in and from the room of the Archive at #75. The meeting of this affective atmosphere, Huyssen’s poetic metaphor, and the actual twilight excursions in Currumbilburra country became interlaced en route, and are all allusively carried in the field collections and studio compositions that shaped the exhibition *Archive Place (Twilight)*, 2012.

Figure 4.5. Louise Boscacci, *Archive Place (Twilight)*, 2012.
Installation view, Hope Gallery (Postgraduate Project Space), University of Wollongong, September 2012.

4.9 *Archive Place (Twilight),* 2012

My principal composition from interlaced strands of the archival exploration, theoretical trace and studio investigation was the exhibition ensemblage *Archive Place (Twilight),* 2012, staged in the Hope Gallery (Postgraduate Project Space) at the University of Wollongong. A short visual presentation of this is included as a slideshow of photographic documentation in the thesis portfolio: *ArchivePlace(Twilight)_2012*.ppsx.

The work brought into play eight wall-mounted *lightenings,* a bespoke round light table with the evolving collection of porcelain photographic postcards and other studio empirica (material tests and accidents), an aural loop of field *soundings*, and a small area wall projection of three selected *v-pulses*. The porcelain postcards, early stage photoshards and processual empirica on the round table were laid out as an array of illuminated image-objects to be touched, picked up, turned over, and explored at whim (Figures 4.1 and 4.5). A wall-mounted digital photo frame disclosed sequences of images that followed studio processes through to final works. This visually acknowledged the studio investigation as being vital to my translated response to the Archive at # 75: one of material and a-bodied movement, trial and error, kiln 'failures', serendipitous accidents, and new empirical findings en route. The digital frame was powered entirely by the solar trunk, pre-charged by solar radiation collected at my studio location in the highlands, providing a subtle reminder of creative energies fuelled simply by walking outside the studio to hold porcelain shards to the sun's brilliant light.

The gallery space was darkened to the level of late civil twilight, a right-fit atmosphere of this temporary gathering, with most of the light coming only from the installed works themselves: the wall-hung lightenings, the round light table, the small digital photo frame and the coloured light of the v-pulse projections.[7] A low-level background audio loop of soundings emanated from another small open metal trunk within the space. To my attunement, these collected haecceities of fluid sound and non-narrative passages of digital video elicited particular emplaced encounters during my archive work and the irresistible pull back out into the nuanced synsensorium each day. Juxtaposing-connecting stilled,

[7] The end of evening civil twilight, or civil dusk (MacRobert 1998). Note that in the images documenting the exhibition, gallery spotlighting was used to slightly brighten the space to aid photography.

crystalline, illuminated porcelain photographic works—the lightenings and table pieces—with flows of images and sound also became a rendition of an emerging refrain of affective place and my creative response: another articulation of ‘pauses’ and ‘pulses’, echoing the pulse and pause teachings of Magpie Geese and the techno-pulse created by the rising sun.

Archive Place (Twilight) is an important marker of this nascent stage of thinking about and wording *pauses* and *pulses*. I mean compositional *pauses* as stilled, crystalline, porcelain photographic works—the lightenings and other ceramic becomings. *Pauses* as the stilling of movement in this long-lived vitreous materiality, however frangible, and, equally, the pause of the ‘ongoing moment’, as the writer Geoff Dyer (2005) has described the flow of time temporarily arrested in every photograph. I mean compositional *pulses* as the ebb and flow of passages of sound, the *soundings*, and moving video imagery mostly rendered as silent witness, the *v-pulses*. And, present also in this relational construct in my thinking is always the particle-wave nature of light: light as both pause and pulse. Stilled material works paused the walking body to stand and look, and where possible touch and pick up, in the co-presence of flows of virtual, digital media, especially sound washing across and into one’s stilled body. At play in the gathered ensemblage of *Archive Place (Twilight)* was the emerging refrain of *pulse_pause* in my making-thinking vocabulary, and its becoming here reflected a generative creative modality that continued to evolve.

Figure 4.6. Becoming an illuminated porcelain photoshard, 2011–13. Top, original print (1924), 6.9 x 11.3 cm. Bottom, *Mag&Jack watch*, 2013, large-scale *lightening*, with inner, lit photoshard, 22 x 45 cm.

1

2

Figure 4.7. The studio processual passage from an original photograph, 1 (8.8 x 8.8 cm); to a wall-hung photographic porcelain lightening, 2 (left, 20 x 25 cm); and 3 (below, 45 x 44 cm), *Tearedad*, 2013–4, *Shard Country* series, installed on a custom round light table.

3

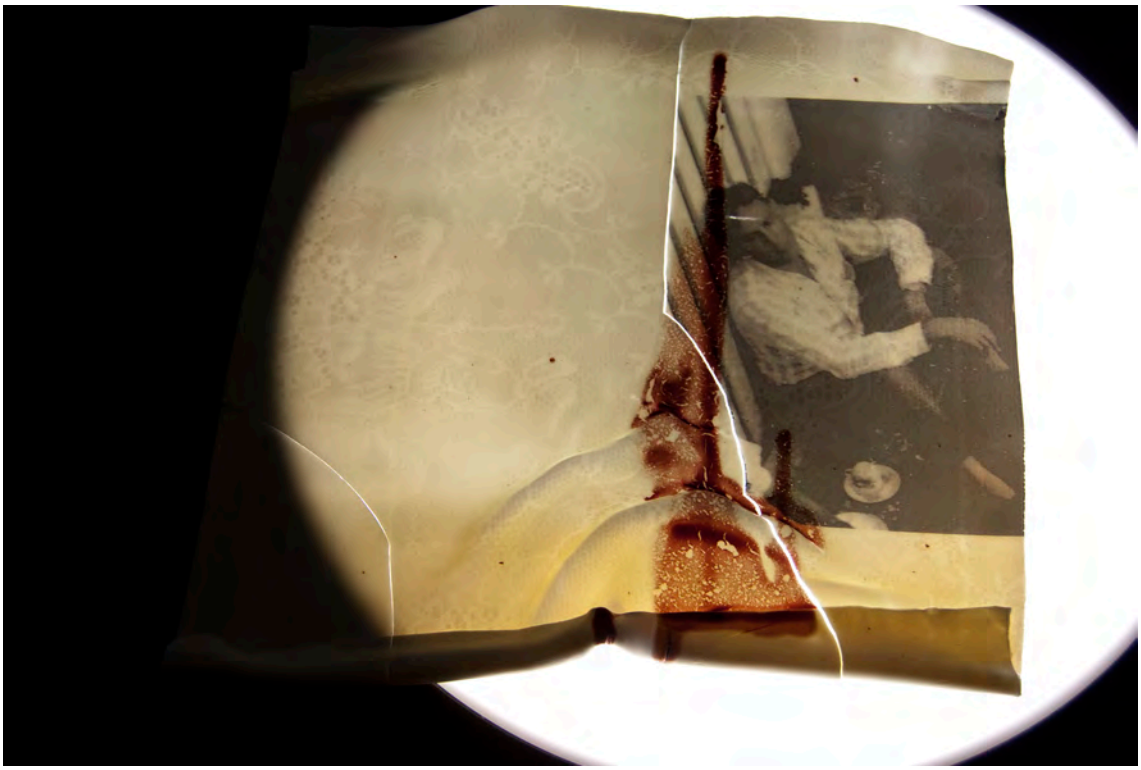


Figure 4.8. *Pulse_Pause,* 2014. Studio detail. *Tearedad,* 2013–4, (paper porcelain photo-ostracon) on a custom round light table. *Legacy of the Commons*, 2011 (digital video projection on vintage window curtain; 300 x 250 cm).

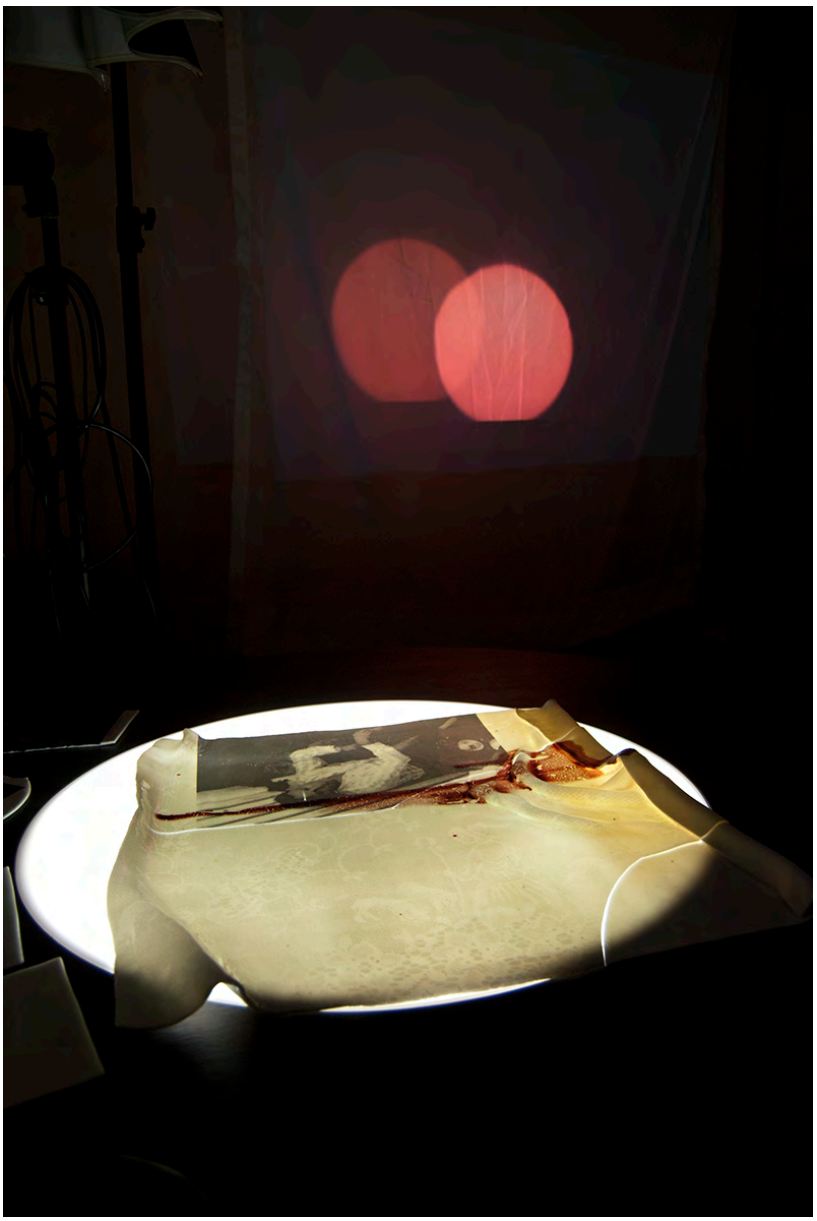


Figure 4.9. *Pulse_Pause,* 2014. Studio detail. *Tearedad,* 2013–4 (paper porcelain photo-ostracon) on a custom round light table. *Pulse 1,* 2011 (digital video projection) in the background.

4.10 Next Stage Becomings

4.10.1 Larger-scale Lightenings

Following the coalescence of the first stage of research in *Archive Place (Twilight)*, my studio investigation continued. New larger lightenings were produced, building on earlier technical solutions with the material vocabulary. A final series of fifteen photo-porcelain lightenings was created, ranging in framed size from 30 x 35 cm to an upper scale of 55 x 65 cm (see Figure 4.6). As a group of illuminated wall works, they extended and concluded the thematic response of 'twilight'. Images of these works can be viewed in the full slideshow *To_the_Archive_Passage_2011-2014*.ppsx in the thesis portfolio.

4.10.2 The Porcelain Photoshard and Photo-ostracon

During the work of progressively scaling up porcelain works, I began to embrace and enjoy the proliferation of the shard in the ceramic studio. In this last section of this chapter, I want to swiftly trace the extension of the porcelain and photographic transfer processes to the emergence of the *photoshard* and *photo-ostracon* in my making vocabulary, the use of these to create larger scale lightenings, on the one hand, and on the other, the assembling of them into a new archival translation titled *Shard Country*, 2011–2014.

Porcelain as a raw clay body has a good memory. This is the resonant lexicon of ceramics-making that alludes to seemingly insignificant knocks or jolts being 'remembered' by the drying clay in the forming processes yet leave no visible hint of damage, even after the first (bisque) firing in the ceramic transformation process. In the final, high temperature firing to 1300°C, however, these on-carried weak points often manifest as cracks, ruptures, material 'failures'. Porcelain is a prolific shard-maker, especially if rolled extremely thinly, at large scales where evenness of sheets is subtly variable, where card-thin skins are embossed by textured templates such as lace curtaining or pieces of corrugated iron, or diamond-point engraved after the still-soft, first-fired stages of making. As the scale of works increased in the studio, the 'failure' rates of thin porcelain forms increased likewise. Cracking of photo-porcelain sheets in the third on-firing of transfer prints also escalated as I scaled up works, particularly during the less-controlled cooling phase of the firing process.

The porcelain shard was a processual ‘accident’ that I came to embrace and welcome in the studio. Porcelain photographic images could be broken in unpredictable places, enhancing or changing the affective register of the image already selected, cropped, or enlarged from its original archive form. I came to anticipate new kiln shard profferings with each firing—and they came to name themselves as *photoshards*. In extension, I began to revisit and re-use the large collection of rejected ‘blank’ porcelain shards and other empirica from the early stages of the studio process for use as new forms for photographic printing, whereby transfer photographic sheets could be torn or cut to fit an irregular shard outline. The focus subtly changed from the rectangular photographic image to the shard form, and selecting the ‘right’ image to fit the individual shard, or multi-piece composition (Figure 4.7). The handheld object, as the shard, began to reassert a new presence, not as the emulation of a picture postcard, or photographic norm, but as a new form of synsensorial image-object. I came to think of these and name them *photo-ostraca*.

The word *ostraca* recalls and refers to the ancient form of the ceramic *ostracon* [the singular; from Greek *ostrakon*], encountered in British collections of objects from antiquity. I studied and photographed ostraca collections on public display during research periods spent in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and in the British Museum, London, in late 2009 (Boscacci 2010). Ceramic ostraca are typically shards from broken pots that have been reused as writing templates or voting ballots; Greek ostraca were observed with voting candidate names scratched into the relatively soft low-fired clay fabric. Egyptian hieratic ostraca in the Fitzwilliam Museum, made from pottery shards as well as limestone flakes, carry literary texts, administrative notes, religious hymns, and copies of tomb inscriptions handwritten in pigments of carbon black and red ochre with a reed pen (Hagen 2011).

From the Archive at #75 in Currumbilbarra country, the ceramic shard, in reuse as a photo-ostracon, emerged as a novel form for new deployments. Selected large porcelain photo-ostraca staged and illuminated on the round light table have become part of new ensemblages composed and photographed in the studio; for example, iterations of *Pulse_Pause*, 2014, are shown in Figures 4.8 and 4.9. Additional imagery of illuminated shard works is provided in *To_the_Archive_Passage_2011-2014*.ppsx. These unframed, open-to-touch, illuminated shards and ostraca continue the evolution of the atmospheric, yet frame-bound lightenings I was first impelled to make. From the long studio investigation, my now-prodigious material collection of other smaller porcelain postcards, print shards, ostraca and processual empirica has become a changing, multi-piece wall ensemblage, titled

Shard Country, 2011–2014. Images of this installed in my studio as a forty-piece arrangement in 2014 can be viewed in the slideshow documentation (*To_the_Archive_Passage_2011–2014*.ppsx). Satisfyingly, even as wall-hung fragments of archival research, the individual shards have retained their image-object's pull to be picked up, turned over, finger-traced, held up to the light, and re-placed.

4.11 Summary and Conclusions

The Round Table postcard and encounter, postcard_*affectus*, led me to the larger Archive at #75, a co-travelling, intergenerational repository of photographs and accompanying ephemera. The archive was encountered as an intriguing, time-rich collection of material, photographic witness in a collection of fragile image-objects—the inner holding sanctum of my postcard provocateur. Continuing the trace of affective push and pull, my first intentions became to explore it and render a translated response in a vocabulary of porcelain-light-archival photographic prints. This was a newly emerging nexus in practice, but equally was perceived as a right fit possibility to approach and explore the material-immaterial, the ephemeral-fragile and the evanescent-resilient experience of affective attunement. My interest in making poetic, non-narrative responses to experiences of the intangible-ineffable yet palpable 'atmosphere' of the idiolocal sphere of Currumbilbarra was also sparked by the potential of this vocabulary. I wondered if feeling-tones generated by research passages in the archive room and the outer hyper-local might also be 'downloaded' in studio works—not represented, but evoked, re-called, at least to me, the maker, and what might be elicited in another beholder, also idiosyncratically attuned, in new encounters with these becomings.

En route, this process encompassed an extended empirical studio investigation of porcelain paper clays, production and use of a collection of digitised archival photographic images as ceramic transfer prints, and lighting solutions for wall-installed illuminated photo-porcelains. This latter led to innovation with LED light panels, and the development of a portable 12 volt solar unit which was deployed in exhibition formats. The illuminated porcelain-photographic forms I have termed *lightenings* are new contributions to a cross-

media nexus of ceramics, photography and light-interactive art. As such, they will continue to evolve in my practice beyond this research. A material lexicon and naming of *porcelain photoshards* and *photo-ostraca* has been a satisfying becoming of studio processes, an unanticipated yet right-feel vocabulary in creative response to an archive of ephemeral, fragile photographs.

Also stimulated by my embrace of the photographic archive was a scholarly inquiry into the nature of the archive in cultural theory and contemporary western art. Derrida's concept of the archive as 'impression and imprint' evoked hints of Deleuze's language of affect and becomings, whereby the movement of affective provocation (Derrida's 'impression') might be translated into creative becomings (Derrida's 'imprint'). Thus, a Derridean archive does not just house and hold things as a repository, but also carries the virtual affective energies and activations to create, accrue and keep-safe, exemplified by the assemblage of image-objects made by many a-bodied familiars over decades into the Archive at # 75. If the Derridean archive is a contingent repository, repose might not be its outcome. Instead, it highlights the role of process in the making of an archive—the archive as process—and, in turn, this gives licence to creatively travel with the archived objects and their new provocations and animations in making, thinking and doing. Despite this, I did feel tempered by the eyes of those returning my gaze in the enlarged images of photographs on my computer screen. As I now appreciate in hindsight, the framed porcelain lightenings pay respectful homage to the archive-makers and familiars engaged in emplaced witness and creative expression—we share this urge, in different ways, in different centuries.

Ultimately, in the process of working with the Archive at #75, I was taken out the window to the affective synsensorium glimpsed or carefully framed in tiny photographs and in the new digitised scans filling my laptop screen: that moving synergism of light flickers, sounds and aromas of the tropical place that flowed in and out of the open casements of the archive room. If all time is *now* time, as Patricia Grace provokes, the archive also became an insistent reminder to fully wit(h)ness the contemporary frame of the hyper-local, to revisit sites recognised in fading vintage photographs, and to return to other favourite haunts in re-acquaintance and witness. In doing so, most frequently at the crepuscular twilight zones of morning and evening, recorded sound and digital video passages became new additions to my working vocabulary. And, from this affective synsensorium, the outer archive of emplaced attunement, *pulse-pause* emerged first as a naming of a rhythmic relation but quickly began to inform and energise my making and thinking as a new modality of

practice: pauses of crystalline stilled forms of ceramic, and ceramic-light, and pulses of fluid sound and video passages. Light, particle and wave, continues to refuse either, inhabiting the dash of the affective, ephemeral *intermezzo* in this creative lexicon.

Beyond the Archive

Towards the completion of the passage of studio work with the Archive at #75, I began to fold the rolled paper porcelain sheets into simple tubular reservoirs, and to print them with archival photo extracts, left-over cuttings and other unused fragments that had accumulated over time. *Shaw Street Seven*, 2012, a group of seven porcelain vessels made in this manner, was donated to the collection of the National Gallery of Australia in 2014 (Figure 4.10). This move followed the death of family photographer and archive-maker, J. M. Ruffle, in late 2013, in response to the sale of the home in which she had lived—my grandparent's ninety-year-old Queenslander house in which I had located new additions to the Archive at #75, including the serendipitous find of my teenage grandmother Mary Margaret O'Farrell's 'Post Card Album'.

Figure 4.10. Louise Boscacci, *Shaw Street Seven*, 2012. Seven translucent porcelain reservoirs with archival photographic prints; dimensions variable, max. 17 x 8 cm.

Folding and enclosing the flat, textured and embossed sheets of paper porcelain into vessel forms marked a return to shaping new carriers of affective response: new forms of affective emplacement. This is the subject of the following chapter, 'In the River Bowl … And its Leavings', the next push in the trace of postcard_*affectus*.

Figure 5.1. Louise Boscacci, *River bowl 5*, 2013. Ceramic.

Chapter Five

In the Riverbowl … And its Leavings

Bodies … animated, mobile, intelligent, reactive (Berardi 2009, p21).

This chapter is in two sections. The first, 'In the Riverbowl', begins in the outer synsensorium of river, coastal plain and broken ring of hills and mountain ranges of Townsville-Currumbilbarra country. This is the riverbowl, as I have come to think of it. From the Archive, as I described in the last chapter, I began to daily re-encounter and reflect on this affective worlding. The new compositions that emerged in response to these returns, the becomings of new push and pull in conversation with a longer attunement, are presented here. I interpret these as new materialised forms of affective emplacement—new objects of affect.

The second section, '… And its Leavings', lays out the serendipitous emergence of the visual vocabulary of the *digital photoshard* from photographic sequences taken from flights leaving the riverbowl and its city at the end of archival research trips. In the unfolding creative passage of postcard_*affectus*, this new visual exploration came to draw from and converse with the material language of the porcelain shard in its final becomings.

Figure 5.2. In the Riverbowl, Townsville-Currumbilbarra, August 2013.

5.1 In the Riverbowl

5.1.1

I

To leave the Riverbowl
I elevate to the Seaview
Range and the rainforest rosegum
assemblies of the old ecotone.

I drive to the summit
winding west_south_east_north
in a circle up the
salmon granite rim
of Mt. Stuart.

Or through the foothills of Cudtheringa
claimed early in the ‘settlement’
days by grand colonial houses – and now
narrow bitumen roads –
to grasp a breath of bay and island and mountains
encircling the old floodplain
and riverscape.

The floodplain is a complex
of not just the Ross, but
a reticulum, a tracery
of ephemeral
creeks and small rivers that
seasonally brim and breach – or did before
urban tamings –
transforming this savannah bowl
into a transient wet land – a fluid
matricum.

Ross River to Cleveland Bay
Bohle River to Halifax Bay
and a vascularity of threading
creeks rising from the etched
encampment of hill, mountain, blue hinter range.

Ross Creek
and the many named
Stuart Creek
and the many unnamed
sandy, gravel-granite traces
snaking out of Mt Stuart – remember
dry season walks looking for
dingo pups?

A pulse and pause
cadence, this,
of flood and flow
overflow and run
then crisp surface stillness
in water's absence.

My first pulse_pause
the eponymous Wet and Dry
now
Wet Post-Wet Pre-Wet

But this return refrain
the dry of light and colour fill
(so soft for such harsh country)
to parched yards
water stressed
with the longing
to the 'build up'

that accumulating
tension
lingering
in
yearly anticipation
of demented koels willing
the rain and signalling its
approach
its imminence
with teasing
cumulus build-me-up
and
not-yet-ness.

And finally the late thunderstorms'
surrender to first deluge and
monsoon (that 'northern' word)
here – we had no local word but the Wet and that was
enough – but
what is the Wulgurukaba greeting?
This deluge of the sensorial?

And then flooding yards
underhouses
streets

and refilling of river
hot creeklines
crusted waterholes
hard lagoons
claypanned saltmarshes
underground subterranean
out-of-sight caches

this keen flush of waiting
creeks
cool over-rock rush
on granite hills and
cut faces
the excitement & gladdening
of fresh
flow

In such a wet, in the
lull of a near-exhausted,
retreating wet,
I first found clay.

(*Rim Notes*: research journal extract, Townsville-Currumbilbarra, 27 July 2013)

5.1.2

II

How to make a river bowl

Making a river bowl is a pulse_pause of clay wheeling. It is best done without speaking. It is best done listening. It is necessary to feel from fingertips to arms, shoulders, lower back, thigh muscles to the balanced balls of feet, the left on ground bracing, the right the rhythm and speed maker on the wheel's steel pedal.

Cut a slab of plastic clay. Your muscles tell you what the body can handle, what the body needs, and what the forming in the mind's eye asks for. Throw it hard to a plaster base and begin to wedge this matter. Two hands. With the whole body, pushing from the thighs, using the solid ground of gravity to rock and lever the push and pull. The clay is cool on the palms. It begins to flow in thixotropic response to movement and the shared warmth of one's homeostatic hands. It appears anonymous, but every clay body is different. This one has fine particles of hard grog to confer extra 'hold': to scaffold the microscopic sliding platelets of clay upwards and outwards in the growing skin of the vessel wall.

Shape this clay, softened and mobile, into a soft ball the size of a melon, and implant from above onto the head of the potter's wheel. A two-foot diameter cut circle of wood, a 'bat', has been affixed there first. The river bowl will be made on this so that it can be later removed intact and carried elsewhere, platter-like, to settle and dry out.

The wheel head is a spinning base. It turns counter-clockwise. The speed of turn, of pulse of turn, is chosen and played by the right foot on the pedal control. Sitting at a potter's wheel is intensely akin to sitting at a drum kit. The body's rhythm is the guide, the maker of rhythm. One plays a potter's wheel like the instrument it is. A good day for throwing is when hands and body and clay flow. A day when the rhythm and flow is absent, when hands are tense, and all is false push and force, is better abandoned to other tasks. A good day will flow into late nights of making until sheer physical exhaustion ends the run. One stays at the wheel when the rhythm is right, the flow on.

The clay ball is 'centred' by the full-speed turning wheel-head, hands and braced body. The clay is 'opened out' to a solid base, the flat footing of bowl. Depending on clay at hand, the

outer wall is begun—a one centimetre skin of clay worked upwards by the centrifugal movement. The river bowl is eager for growth now. There is energy and anticipation in the air. Timing is everything. Is it hot or cold in the 'throwing' space? How quickly does one need to work to keep the clay compatible as fluid, responsive yet self-supporting matter?

How to travel up from river base to belly out to finally perch on a river bowl rim? Needed here is a continual stream of clay coils extruded from the small wall-mounted instrument that is fed wedged clay from above and squeezes out pliable thick 'spaghetti' of clay one catches from below. It has a pivoted handle that, once more, and on each occasion, one pulls down with the whole body, stage by stage to slowly extrude a metre-long soft line of potential. One by one these lines are circled onto the growing belly, and slowly joined and then thrown-shaped into the growing turning form. Each new section, perhaps a six-inch spurt of increase, is gently dried and firmed by a handheld gas torch.

The bowl grows by this pulse-pause rhythm of movement and stillness. It grows over the day, and sits wrapped in plastic overnight, for the next day. And the next. The largest river bowl will take up to four days in cool wet weather to reach its destination. Warmer days make working faster and more precarious because clay always wants to release its moisture, always wants to settle, harden, become layered dust before stone-like ceramic. Each bowl says *when*, when to release hands, when to stand and step back and know when it is enough, as much as the waiting capacity of the kiln chamber. The when to let be, abandon, is felt. It is rare to get this timing of pulse-pause 'right'. There is a call-and-response to making and each occasion is a new listening and heeding. Each requires this surrender to feel rather than will, or attempted displays of virtuosity. This is the continual learning of making, the lessons of clay, and of pulse and pause compositions. There is much to learn, and to surrender, *en route*.

Each night the counter-clockwise wheeling returns to one's body in repose. This too is embodied, taken in as somatic rhythm, not consciously sought but imbibed physically by the immersion of process, of the new a-bodiment in this making. It is an insight into how walked rhythms in a Belonged-by Place emplace themselves in one's body to be accessed—'downloaded'—recomposed in other matter in new forms of emplacement by collections of a-bodied making. It invokes questions about somatic memory, and the potential universe of a-bodied making. It stimulates reflection on the transmission of this physicality and fecund

ineffability into new forms of affective emplacement. The route to this is via the processual materiality of practice.

But the new morning is given over again to the clay hands, and stiff muscles are stretched and warmed and re-activated. They remember, and want more of this give and take and make. Body muscles sing out for use. They always surprise how far they can go when asked to make big river bowls one by one, each growing in scale over a passage of six months. What will these same muscles remember in the next passage of this making of movement and stilling?

Meanwhile, collect clays, alluvial imbrications laid down and flavoured by many wets and drys in the riverbowl Commons. You will note the pungent aroma of organic rot, of samphire and mangrove, of microbial reactivation by water and soaking time in a warm bucket. Filter out the charcoal, sand, twigs, dead insects. What remains is silken particularity. Tonal umbers and reds and golds and greys of settled ground clays. Little platelets of place.

Employ the ancient Roman ceramic technique of making *terra sigillata*, or 'earth seal'. Be left after two weeks with a flocculated cream of clay, a suspended liquid of talcum fine clay, a 'slip' of process. Take some liquefied white Ice porcelain from the Archive's photoshard makings, and mix the two: aged alluvial gatherings with a touch of newly bagged Tasmanian chalky white porcelain body. One pungent of vital tropical place still; one cool, chalky and quiet. Explore this mattered meeting in kiln temperatures over multiple firings to find the right proportions of each to 'fit' the river bowl through the transformation to a vitreous ceramic body. To fit is to stay on, to not shell off as a 'foreign' skin during the rise from the day's ambience to white heat, and back again. Know that each mix, and each kiln firing will become a new rendering, that each will always be unknowable in advance, that this is empirical process, once-off and once-only. There are no guarantees of final kiln outcome from all that has been gleaned thus far. But go ahead: brush skins of riverbowl *terra sigillata* onto each new vessel. The process ports one back to that Commons' wetland remnant, the claypans and mangrove creek, the aerial pulses of magpie geese undulating as sounding lines overhead, the heating morning underfoot.

Follow the impulse to inlay lines of red Egyptian paste into the leatherhard bowl bellies slowly turning again by hand control on a wheel. This is a material refrain elaborated over

two decades of practice, so it is a time-rich iteration that is pleasurable and meditative in process. A whole bowl will take at least a day's sitting. It is unexpectedly hard on the working arm and shoulder. Then repeat with another skin of *terra sigillata*. Take your small smooth river stone and burnish this new big form. Then leave it, still, drying, waiting for the next passages of kiln firing, glaze poolings, and kiln firing.

A kiln's work is heatwork transformation. Clay platelets of alumina and silica converted to crystalline stone-like ceramic fabric. The old parlance of stoneware is not surprising. But when the kiln chamber door is opened, and the wave of warmth meets one's body on a cool September morning, reach in and place a palm to belly. It will not remain warm to the touch for long. And tap that big silent bowl standing there. Listen to its deep echoing chime from just below the rim. Listen to the river bowl anew.

5.1.3

III

Compositions

***In the Riverbowl* series, 2013**

Five river bowls. Stoneware ceramic.

Figure 5.3. *In the Riverbowl* series, 2013. Body-and-wheel formed stoneware clays; *terra sigillata* slips made from mixed alluvial clays collected from a Townsville-Currumbilbarra remnant claypan, lagoon and creek mosaic; inlays of Egyptian paste; porcelain slip; glazes. Maximum height 54 cm; diameter 53 cm. Group dimensions: 54 x 175 cm.

View a passage of the making of this work in the thesis portfolio presented as: *In_the_Riverbowl_2013*.ppsx.

The group was exhibited in the major ceramics survey exhibition *Turn, Turn, Turn: The Studio Ceramics Tradition at the National Art School* at the National Art School Gallery, Sydney, June 5 to August 8, 2015.

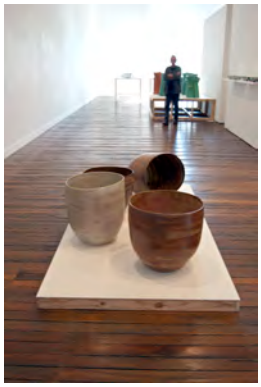


Figure 5.4. *In the Riverbowl* series, 2013: two gallery views. National Art School Gallery, Sydney, June 5 to August 8, 2015. (Curator Glenn Barkley; Associate Curator Ivan Muñiz Reed).

***River belling*, 2013**

An aural passage of the chime of a struck river bowl.

Listen to this sounding via the thesis portfolio file titled *Riverbelling*.mp3.

Opening the still-warm kiln, facing a torso-sized pot, I instinctively do what all potters do with bowls at the end of a multi-stage firing process—'sound' the rim of each with the gentle strike of fingers to discern if a clear chiming tone is returned, indicating there are no cracks at the end of the long making. Sounding a bowl for its tone of rim is the impulse and pleasurable ritual of bowl making. Every bowl makes its own chime; *every* bowl is different.

Each big warm bowl offering its chime and rolling resonances greeted me over a passage of six months. What does a river bowl sound? These bellings, recorded in listening sessions as each bowl emerged from its kiln time, became a distant addition to the in-field recordings of sound passages, the aural haecceities introduced in Chapter Four. They have become part of the archive of soundings, elicited over 2000 kilometres away from the source of the movement of their making. One selected recording is presented in this thesis.

5.1.4

IV

Making A-bodied

How to write of a-bodied making, materiality and affective emplacement? How to express the meeting of body, clay and the processual? The preceding accounts attempt to articulate what became as large river bowls. They are an assembly of touchstones: new tangible objects of synsensorial 'download'. They emerged as objects from affective overflow: new objects of affect. The river bowls are new materialised forms of affective emplacement.

They are another outcome of composing from the belonged-by place of the Round Table postcard's landing. They carry spaces of encounter, aesthetic pleasures and nuances, and a-bodied intensities re-composed. This is the realm of processual materiality. It is the downloading of embodied carriage into crystallised ceramic forms that begin with fluid, moving clay body on a turning wheel, surrender to process and the vagaries and potential of materials, with no certainty of outcome. Of 'works' revealed when the pulse of making lulls to new pause. The bowls were not an endeavour to represent or depict; rather they are another exploration and re-embodiment of affectivity. Visual connections and patterns made in the sequence of images presented in the slideshow *In the Riverbowl 2013*.ppsx were distilled after the vessel series was completed, drawing from a large archive of photographic documentation accrued on research trips and in the studio. But in their fired skins of idiolocal clays, the bowls also chemically carry this place in their made matterings: they are material wit(h)nesses as well as translated download.

I want to articulate this again, in other words. I began this synsensorial wheeling with this: the inner imperative to shape whole, open, three-dimensional forms again, and embed the actual matter-fabric of affective place in the makings. When the imperative to return to the turning wheel was inescapable, and composing bowls for an internalised, embedded riverbowl became the instinctive vocabulary not questioned but listened to, *big* bowls called.

I made them because I needed to. They are an answer to the internal push to make from an accumulation of affective energies, beyond words, description or intentional signification. To set out to respond in three dimensional tangibility, guided by 'right feel' and 'right fit', to the internal 'insistence' gathering after research returns to the affective idiolocal to make

large bowl forms. This is a trace of material becomings, which also accepts the vagaries and uncertainties of the making processes of the ceramic medium. The bowls carry feeling tones and mind's eye images that lingered, becoming a virtual prefiguring that gave way to that making process. They emerged from the Riverbowl of naming, learning, meeting, watching, listening, revisiting, smelling, speaking of, advocating for, receiving intense aesthetic pleasure from, wondering about, researching, tracing and connecting from.

The bowls each carry collecting trips to gather old ant nest umber clays, to dig clay from mangrove creek edges beside a drying lagoon walked to, not for clay but for brolga watching in the Commons, the old Town Common lands, on the edge of the city wedged up to coast and bound by new and unfinished periurban sprawl. This is a favoured place of the saltpans, where encrustings of circular sheets of silver-white salt on umber and grey clay grounds are ringed by red reticulae of samphires. This familiar visual pleasure of the dry tropical coastal wetlands always co-acts with its salty, crisp aroma.

The bowls carry, embed and call back to aspects of familiar country and its rhythms — visual imbibings, and of movements within place, 'feeling-tones', shared experiences of walking in, climbing above, standing, watching, listening. These incorporations of affective place re-incorporated into five bowls. Now, they port me back to particularities, occasions, light-shadow spaces, moments, aromas of this affective place. They have these unexpected portal properties, for me, but perhaps for no other person. A new *affectus* of object, bowl, compositional assembly, stands silently as I write. That is all I could ask of these five.

The group was made over the span of six months from June to November 2013, not in North Queensland but in the Illawarra Highlands. They were wheel-thrown one by one, and fired individually as each was finished and slowly dried. As the series progressed, I resolved the technical means and physical ability to increase the scale in height and width of each. After two decades of making clay vessels on a wheel, I heeded an inner imperative to physically push beyond the dimensions of anything I had wheel-formed previously. The tallest, most capacious bowl, was made last. The largest bowls took a week to throw, slowly adding sections, allowing each hand-formed section of the vessel wall to dry to a self-supporting stage, before moving on upwards, outwards. Each new bowl was also in part a response to the previous one, and to the evolving gathering, as I felt my way along that remembered line of river from the open sandy catchment beds to tight mid-river depths to looping old meanders in the lower reaches and the delta's approach. In the end, the upper

scale of these works was only limited by the size of kiln chamber in which each single big bowl had to fit.

The five bodies of the bowls also carry idiosyncratic glaze experiments—white on whites on grey-bodied stoneware clays—recalling those saltpan whites on umber clays. In the processual studio, once sparked, I began to be taken back to those evocative aesthetics of the saltpans and started lining the innards of the bowls with patches and pools. Collected floodplain clays were rendered as versions of the ancient ceramic technique of terra sigillata, speculatively incorporating porcelain clay used in other makings, and thereby linking these big resilient bowls to the translucent sheets and photoshards of the *Archive Place (Twilight)* series. This was, as ever, an experimental process, getting the idiolocal place clays to 'fit' to other clay-bodied bowls. But by literally being skinned in the clays of the affective place, the bowls have become material carriers of the Commons and intimately connect with passages of twilight encounters previously embodied in porcelain, soundings and v-pulses.

Each firing was a separate kiln occasion, an individual day into night, an individual kiln atmosphere, each in the shifting particularities of local highlands' weather from frosted winter mornings and freezing nights to hot summer stillness. How much of *this* idiolocal immersion is also embedded in these compositions? What was made, besides the stilled crystalised ceramic forms standing in the warm kiln chamber, was also a renewed physical pleasure in the whole-bodied immersion of moment-to-moment making, with attendant muscle aches and adrenalin highs and lows from the near-collapse of a bowl-in-progress, recovery and re-start, successfully lifting each big completed bowl from the wheelhead, to finally, the unexpected kiln 'gifts' only encountered after lengthy passages of firings. This: the addictive empirical modality of making with clay, movement, and the unpredictable processes of becoming-ceramic.

The river bowls are five renditions of a-bodied encounters and wit(h)nessing in moving clays stilled to new pauses of ceramic memory matter. Made one by one, on a turning wheel, each is a time-rich, bodily-invested form. As objects of affect in their inception and making, I intend them to be met by the whole body, for encircling, pausing with, looking into, scanning with fingertips, making chime. By this, they share with all other somatic objects (Bennett 1997), and the synsensorially affective postcard, the necessity for much more than the optical in encounter.

Figure 5.5. Louise Boscacci, *Rocky remnant 27*, 2013.
Giclée archival print, 50 x 60 cm.

5.2 … And its Leavings

Ascending from the Riverbowl, the line of flight south takes off to the north in a steep climb up over the remnant mosaic of the Commons edging Halifax Bay, then a long slow arc back down Cleveland Bay, the boom city spreading across the river plains west, to my right, and its boom port growing below me.

5.2.1 Emergence of the Photoshard (digital and print) in the trace of postcard_*affectus*

In 2011, I began photographing the Riverbowl as I flew in and flew out on return research trips, but my focus became my *leaving* flights because the aerial path was over the Commons (the Town Common Environmental Park) and along the coastline with the city to the right, to the west, in my line of vision. I always booked a right side window seat—an old habit depending on the desired aspect when leaving a place—and soon one towards the back of the cabin to clear the visual obstruction of the aircraft's wing.

My interest at first was in re-looking at and taking in the changing colours and condition of the Commons mosaic of wetland and forest, the river's meandering line, the rapid spread of the city, the new edgelands of periurban creep into remnant savannah country, the new ecotones of economic boom.

As I began to investigate the shadow places of the expanding Townsville Port (Chapter Six), I was also flying over or close to it, and so began to intensively photograph the port precinct, the expanding port works seawards and south engulfing the river delta, and the new Ross River bridge beginning to span the old river mouth to connect the port by a new industrial road from the southwest.[1] I began serially photographing from my aircraft cabin window, pressed up against that sealed lens, in a continuous line from the Commons, along the city Strand, along and over the port. I continued as the jet elevated slowly in its trajectory along the sweep of mangrove-lined, creek-skeined Cleveland Bay, and as it cut across Cape Cleveland where it stemmed out into the Bay. I continued as we lifted over the southern approaches to greater Townsville, arcing occasionally to proffer a view back over the spread of city, Bay, port, Cudtheringa, Mount Stuart, Ross River Dam's glistening

[1] This is the Eastern Access Corridor of the Townsville Port Access Road.

silence, the bounding blue western ranges of the old ‘hinterland’. I continued as we tracked over the Burdekin sugar cane lands, the majestic, thick, serpentine Burdekin River and its vast Dam inland, always visible from the high altitude now being reached into.
This ‘flying out’ digital photography project thus arose spontaneously, compellingly, as I once again was leaving this Affective Place. It was enthralling to examine a city and country intimately known over a lifetime. I had never had the opportunity to scrutinise on repeated occasions and over different seasons this familial spread below me—below my flightless feet.

The temporal passage from lift off to lift into cloudy altitude, the duration of each photographic episode on these leavings, lasted about ten minutes. Less if low cloud interrupted the line of sight to the ground. Each leaving flight of photographic witness became an event, anticipated, prepared for, poised in seat for, begun when safe to reach down and pick up the camera positioned beneath my cabin seat and brace it and body up against the window. But the transience of each event lingered and sparked a new series of compositional becomings in this trace.

After each research trip, I began to scrutinise the aerial passage that emerged in the high-resolution digital photographs enlarged on a computer screen. I began looking closely at places known over decades, registering changes across the riverbowl country, and looking closely at those sites just revisited on that particular return trip, that return grounded fielding on foot, now visible as pans of pixels rendered from above.

The process was akin to zooming into the image as one would a glass-mounted section of tissue under a microscope, progressively increasing lens magnification. There was a playful connection with this other familiar realm of ‘looking’ and ‘entering’ that intuitively felt right.

I began to extract circular ‘biopsies’ of the pixelated images using Adobe Photoshop software: sampling circular and oblong patches from the raw camera image viewed at ‘actual pixel’ resolutions. This was a move away from the rectangular image of origin, and mirrored my interest in the circular—from the microscope lens to the ceramic bowl or flat porcelain pan viewed from above. Working with rounded ceramics formed on a wheel, the circular recurs as a reflex in doing and making, so why not cross converse with these threads of connection in biological and ceramics practice to extract new photographic

images? The process was intentionally exploratory, energised by intuiting a ‘right feel’ in its unfolding, and remaining curious about what might emerge in this new free play. I began to stretch and pull extracted patches of pixels beyond acuity or crisp resolution, and to fracture and tear the edges in the stretching. Circles and ellipses distorted, frayed and ripped. Individual, evenly sized square pixels stretched to irregular strips of colour blur.

There was an intuitive correspondence with stretching and pulling and ripping the sheer skin-like photo transfer sheets as I applied them to vitreous paper-porcelain sheets and shards in the ceramic studio (Chapter Four). This, also, was a still-developing process once the technical problems of application and on-firing regimes for larger ceramic transfer prints were resolved: stretching and pulling onto the porcelain shards. I could be less cavalier with transfer prints because of the material expense, but where they did rip, fray and peel back at the edges, these often became the most satisfying processual and final, fired-on, images. This was a fingertip stretch of a translucent image-skin onto a cool crystalline vitreous fabric—a viscerally satisfying stretching to the limit of material integrity whilst retaining visual coherence and relation to the source archival photographs. Fixed as crystalline porcelain pauses, they became ceramic shards: fragments, remnants, tangible and more ambiguous in image and context. As I began to biopsy the new digital photographs, shapes of digital pulls and stretches began to echo and converse with the proliferating range of porcelain shards in the ceramic studio.

But, in process, pixelated extracts from new aerial leavings also evoked a working notion of pliable tissues of colour, light, geography and landform patterning, derived as spatial and temporal extractions from each occasion of flight. I wondered how far I could stretch, *un*resolve, visually abstract from an original large-scale colour image without losing my own recognition of this return place. How much might it even enhance my identification with particularities of this affective place by zooming in, into colour hues, light intensities, shadow patterns, river winds, mountainous familiars? At what points in the process do these new shards of digital photographs collected en route become anonymous to me? Atopic? Can they ever? Does this matter? These were questions that emerged in the unfolding process of finding and rendering a new archive of digital *photoshards*.

This technique of working with digital photographic images was also extended to selected images taken from vantage points above the city on Mount Stuart, and from a new on-ground riverbowl walking collection assembled during the research period. I also began to

explore the process with previously scanned archival black and white photographs—those first ephemeral material shards—in a circular return to the early trace of postcard_*affectus*. With this modality, I have happened upon a new potential bloom space for future photographic workings, including other creative translations of archival collections.

In the midst of this process, I came to name these digital images as *photoshards*. The wording arose spontaneously as I realised I was making new virtual image shards via patches of extracted and distorted pixels. I introduced this naming in Chapter Four in relation to the porcelain photoshard, but it was in the present visual investigation that began in the flight leavings that the lexicon was ultimately realised as a 'right fit' for both of these compositional series emerging around the same time. That this co-poietic and recursive looping in the trace of affect's doings and becomings was what made it a 'right fit' and 'right feel' vocabulary—the material shard and its hands-on studio processes conversing with the digital photograph to connect and name an emerging articulation of affective place under the umbrella of 'Shard Country'.

5.2.2 Compositions: *Becoming Shard Country* photoshard series, 2012–2014

An array of high-resolution aerial photographs was accrued during successive leavings. From this, a digital archive of photoshard images was progressively extracted. The technique was briefly extended to several chosen scanned photographs of the Archive at #75, but this seemed disrespectful of the original photographers and their motivations and intentions, and was discontinued.

From this new digital photoshard archive, a print series of ten A4 and four A1 Giclée archival prints was made. Two photoshards were printed as colour Duratrans (A3; 50 x 60 cm) for illumination purposes, echoing the approach adopted with the porcelain paperclay *lightenings* (Chapter Four). One of these duratrans prints, *Oolbun shard*, 2013 was used in an illuminated format in the 2013 exhibition assemblage *Pulse-pause 2013* (see Chapter Six). The digital photographic archive of *Becoming Shard Country*, 2012–2014 will continue to be used for exhibition and other print renditions in continuing practice. It will also be added to from future leavings over time in continuing affective witness, investigation and visual articulation.

Enter the selected passage of thirty digital photoshards in: *Becoming_ShardCountry*.ppsx in the thesis portfolio.

5.3 Conclusion

What can a body do? What might an affective object encounter become? Whole-bodied immersive making of big clay-bodied vessels on a turning wheel became an irrefutable push of the affective riverbowl synsensorium of Currumbilbarra-Townsville. The ensemble of five bowls found their skins melded from local clays collected from eco-remnants on the edges of the spreading contemporary city on the cusp of a new intensifying phase of industrialisation and urban growth. They carry the place, and moments of place encountering, inside and out.

The six month process of river bowl making created a new physical and technical capacity in the studio: these forms of emplacement are a breakthrough and extension of two decades of downloading energies and feeling-tones into moving, plastic clays. They are the largest renditions of hand-and-body wheel working I have composed; ultimately, the scale of their becoming was only limited by the size of the kiln chamber required for the firing conversion to long-lived ceramic stillness. If affect is virtual and transitory as Massumi (2002) reminds me, its unexpected a-bodied activations embraced and harnessed have nonetheless materialised these new crystalline pauses in the passage of postcard_*affectus.* The open stone bowls chime with the tap of a finger. In this after-resonance of the riverbowl, I am ported back to the meanders and moments of its affective doings.

With each air-borne leaving, below me, the riverbowl continued to exert its push and pull, and vividly reveal its contemporary ‘settlement’ not visible and not accessible to encounterings on the ground. The serendipitous emergence of the digital photographic photoshard was a visual response to this affective idiolocal(e) on the cusp of change—a ‘sharding’ of country—and has kindled a new idiosyncratic vocabulary both in this research

trace and as potential for future practice. It converses indirectly with the idea of affective atmosphere drawn into this thesis earlier (Chapters Two and Four): another 'reach' for a language of making and visualising that attends to the pull of the ineffable, immaterial, transient, ephemeral feeling-tones elicited by affective attunement to a *belonged-by place*. This visual vocabulary will continue to evolve in technique and outcome as new images, both digital forms and material prints, are added to the archive. The stoneware bowls and the photoshards are kin workings of the affective riverbowl and its flighted leavings.

Departure flights also visually revealed the rapidly expanding industrial port of Townsville projecting out into Cleveland Bay. At the mouth of the river, vividly laid out below my airborne travelling body, was the contemporary manifestation of the same port through which Ellen Carroll and the Round Table postcard had entered Townsville-Currumbilbarra and the affective *locus* of this thesis.

In the next chapter, the affective meets the ecological—the *eco-affective*—in the trace of postcard_*affectus* and its compositional provocations. In this line of flight, I enter the material and ecological shadows of my Affective Place via the philosophical concept of 'Shadow Places' (Plumwood 2008).

Figure 6.1. Port of Townsville, July 2013.
Archive of Leavings, 2011–2014. Digital photograph.

Chapter Six

Seeking the Shadow Places

6.1 The co-travelling of the affective and the ecological

In Chapter Five, making new material touchstones of affect also elicited ‘Belonged-by Place’, another naming of the situated, yet not-on-any-map synsensorium of Currumbilbarra-Townsville country by the diffractions of affective attunement. In this chapter, I add a new inflection in the creative-critical becomings of the trace of postcard_*affectus* by embracing the entanglement of affect and ecological consciousness in my practice.

To track this movement in my thinking, the notion of being *belonged by*—a sharp distinction from the idea of seeking belonging, or *belonging to*—also animates new questions. If being belonged by is *a-bodied* knowledge, what reciprocal obligations are invoked? What are the ecological injunctions of being bodily nourished and materially supported as well as creatively fed and energised by my belonged-by place? How might I elaborate this entangled co-travelling of the affective and the eco-logical in my practice as an artist-researcher, a practice also affectively modulated by the inner voice and the tunings of the ecoscientist?

At this point in the trace of postcard_*affectus*, I meet and draw on the ecophilosophical concept of Shadow Places (Plumwood 2008) as a rich body of thought that triggers new compositions in making and thinking in my project. I describe a novel case study by which I move to name the shadow places of the affective locus of the postcard encounter. I travel further with this new trajectory of the trace in practice and reflect on the creative potential of an ethics of the eco-affective.

6.2 The Concept of Shadow Places

> [A]ccept all these shadow places too as ‘our’ place, not just the privileged, special, recognised place, the castle-of-the-self place called home (Plumwood 2008, para 24).

Asserting 'there is no One True Place', Australian ecofeminist philosopher Val Plumwood (2008) created the evocative term and concept of the Shadow Places. She argues that *all* places have their Shadow Places: the multiple places of material, economic and ecological support that delineate our ecological footprint but are likely to elude our knowledge and responsibility. Her concept takes impetus from what she problematises as 'loose discourse' or 'bland celebration' of 'sense of place' accounts of emplacement and belonging that she identifies in strands of discourse on place within the creative environmental humanities. She calls for the uncritical use of the Heideggerian concept of *dwelling* ('heimat') to be replaced by *place-based critique* that acknowledges that ecological responsibility *must* be a part of belonging. This does not mean jettisoning 'place awareness/ encounter/ attachment projects or discourses' (2008, para 4), but that the awareness and accounting for the connected places of material and biophysical support that are part of each person's and each place's ecological footprint must be incorporated into any project of emplacement or belonging. Local places and communities should always be imagined in relationship to others, she argues, rather than as singular and self-sufficient: connectivity is at the heart of an ecological conception of a local home place or bioregion.[1] The concept of shadow places argues for an ecological reconception of places of belonging, one that recognises 'the shadow places, not just the ones we love, admire or find nice to look at', Plumwood (2008, para 2) writes. This means ecological thought in any creative account has to be '*much more than a literary rhapsody about nice places, or about nice times (epiphanies) in nice places*' (2008, para 2; emphasis added).

Plumwood refers to 'the affective place' in developing her shadows ecocritique, but this is expressed in her text as 'the place of and in mind, attachment and identification, political effectiveness, family history, ancestral place' (2008, para 7). For her, the dissociation of this affective place from 'the economic place that is such a feature of the global market is yet another manifestation of the mind/body dualism that has shaped the western tradition' (2008, para 7). Whilst there is overlap in our shared vocabulary, I want to mark the difference in my focus and emphasis. In the context of my affect-entangled practice, I understand that subjectivation—the process of becoming-subject—shapes an artist's

[1] Paradoxically, Marc Augé's (1995) concept of the *non place* that also posits that places can only really be understood as part of a globalised world (and economy) is invoked by Plumwood's thesis of shadow places of connection, but this is at the same time clearly not what Plumwood argues: hers is a texturing of place difference, not the atopic contraction to the non place.

spectrum of responses to any place, as it does in relation to any encounter. Becoming-subject, as Berardi (2009, p127) writes, 'is not at all natural: it happens within social, economic and media conditions that are constantly changing'. In art production, subjectivation becomes translatory: in the context of Félix Guattari's (1995) paradigm of ethico-aesthetics, which I find useful to draw into conversation with Val Plumwood's concept in this chapter, aesthetic response describes the processual translations of chaos, or the 'infinite velocity of reality flows', into 'chaoids'—the 'sensible translators' that are idiosyncratic to each artist-maker (Berardi 2009, p126).[2] If subjectivation shapes an artist's spectrum of responses to any place, my compositional becomings in the name of art practice are self-calibrated 'right fits' for *an/ this* affective place in my processes of creative translation. Thus, I want to stress the *unwilled, autonomic affectivity* of my affective place—a place of changing, even ambivalent 'attachment', family history and intergenerational connection that is also temporally brief compared with Indigenous Wulgurukaba and Bindal clan and family ancestries of emplacement over hundreds of generations. Such affectivity is both one of powerful enhancement and diminishment, the fluid belonged-by push and pull of my own idiosyncratic, affective attunement, as I have explored in previous chapters. I do not invest a singular *identity* in this formative homeplace, but I do acknowledge its power on me—the surprising power of unwilled affectivity—and this has caused me to acknowledge debt. Affective debt translates as ecological debt: as an artist-researcher, I am moved to acknowledge and find 'right fit' novel ways to wit(h)ness and assign value to this *locus* increasingly called to mind now as the melodious, rolling *Currumbilbarra* of the Wulgurukaba naming.

I encountered Plumwood's evocative concept of the Shadow Places when already well into my trace of postcard_*affectus*. On the one hand, its critique of contemporary 'sense of place' projects in literary ecocriticism (in particular) that critically ignore ecological

[2] I can find no evidence that Plumwood engaged with Guattari's ecosophical oeuvre, for instance his thinking in 'The Three Ecologies' (Guattari 1989). Her own rigorous ecophilosophy was profoundly informed and animated by her attentive and curious encounters with fellow 'earth others', her other-than-human teachers, both companions and predators (Plumwood 1993, 2012). I make no suggestion that Guattari's work ever intersected with Plumwood's influential but lesser-known oeuvre. But, I contend, each was engaged in a complementary project of radical ecocritique and philosophical composition; together, they have been synergistically powerful in my thinking and praxis articulated in this chapter of my trace.

connectivity resonates strongly with my dissatisfaction and unease with the term ‘sense of place’ in my own practice, and for my unfolding affective trace—especially my contention, being explored in this chapter, that *affect creates belonged-by knowledge*, and that this is always entangled with the ecological. Rather than opening up a creative space of particularity and nuance, the ambiguous-vague-multivalent ‘sense of place’ promotes a universalising approach to articulating place relations, perceptions and experiential responses, earning, to my mind, the status of ready lexical cliché. As an artist-researcher, I immediately want to ask of it: Which sense? Whose sense? When? Where? In a wider context of thinking about emplacement-displacement and belonging, my lingering unease and critical dissatisfaction with the term ‘sense of place’ was an affective push: to excavate more, to better understand my early, instinctive and explicit rejection of it in my own articulations of practice in which idiolocal place, forces of encounters, relational energies and material objects are entangled elements of research and composition. To attend to this affective niggle I tracked the expression ‘sense of place’ from the ancient Roman *genius loci* to an eighteenth century revival of the *genius loci* in English landscape gardening to a contemporary multivalent sphere of reference and cross-disciplinary use. A distillation of this review is given in the text box insert ‘*Genius loci* to “Sense of Place”’, below.

So, on the one hand, the concept of Shadow Places offers a decisive point of conceptual rupture. And, on the other, Shadow Places thinking offers a transversalising moment in my practice—a new creative trajectory in making and thinking that responds to the co-travelling of affective and ecological emplacement. I begin this movement at the contemporary port, an aerial image of which opens this account (Figure 6.1).

Genius Loci to 'Sense of Place'

The expression a 'sense of place' is widely interpreted as a derivation of the Latin term *genius loci* from ancient Roman culture—literally 'the spirit of the place' (Lappin 2014; Laing 1963). The *genius* or guardian spirit—'a demon it was often called'—was attached to every location, every object, every act, every process, and sometimes, every stage of process (Laing 1963, p3). In ancient Roman polytheism, the *genii loci* protected and nurtured the human inhabitants and their activities within a defined territory where each *genius* had power to act. These numen multitudes shared the encountered world, and crucially, helped or hindered humans with whom they interacted: they were a nurturing or withering force in the landscape (Lappin 2014; Kamm 1995). Reciprocity was an inherent part of this life-belief system: ritual sacrifice and offerings at dedicated, emplaced altars were essential for humans to harmonise with the resident *genius* of their home *locus* (Laing 1963; Lappin 2014).

The ancient idea of the *genius loci* was revived in the early eighteenth century by the English poet Alexander Pope (1903) who introduced it into English literature and reshaped it as a concept with the invocation of *the genius of the place*: 'Consult the genius of the place in all …'. This was functional allegory, a translation adapted to promote a new picturesque ideal in the Enlightenment-era movement of English landscape gardening (Hunt & Willis 2000; Jivén & Larkham 2003). Pope's 'genius' was no longer a relational tutelary (guardian spirit), but a site-specific guide or muse of place reminding the human designer to attune to and work in tandem with it: the genius was now an *in situ* guide that 'paints' and 'designs'.

In a contemporary context, 'sense of place' now draws a range of scholarly interpretations and associations. For instance: 'Sense of place is a much used expression … so that now it means very little. It is an awkward and ambiguous translation … we now use the current version to describe the *atmosphere* to a place, the quality of its environment' (Jackson 1994 in Jivén & Larkham 2003, pp157–8). In contrast, Gregory et al. (2009, p676) write that it is 'usually taken to refer to the *attitudes and feelings* that individuals and groups hold *vís-á-vís* the geographical areas in which they live. It further commonly suggests intimate, personal and emotional relationships between self and place' in phenomenological discourses on belonging.

The multiplicity, ambiguity and elusiveness of the term ‘sense of place’ is canvassed more recently by Convery, Corsane and Davis (2012), who nevertheless deem it to be a useful framing concept to gather together multidisciplinary scholarship on place-based experience and knowledge-making. Still, the vibrant particularism of the ancient Roman pandemonism, the buzzing vitality of the numen-filled, enworlded imagination of everyday existence, and the code of reciprocity in place relations that attend the *genii loci* become collapsed and occluded in the modern catch-all ‘sense of place’.

An inflection of the nuanced liveliness of the life-worlds animated and inhabited by the forces of the *genii loci* is revived by the art critic Lucy Lippard’s (1997) extended meditation on place relations in the USA. She expands the singular ‘sense’ to ‘senses of place’, eloquently drawing in multiple voices to articulate personal places of attachment and intergenerational history in written memoir and diary modes, photography, and oral history accounts. Lippard’s approach shifts thought to a more generative mode for creative translations: rather than seeking to define or fix ‘a’ or ‘the’ ‘sense of place’, it draws musings on questions of ‘what does this (affective) place *do*; undo; become as articulations and compositions in situated practice?’

6.3 Towards a Shadow Toponymy: A Creative Case Study of The Port of Townsville

As a project of creative translation, I devised a case study to seek and name the shadow places of the affective country of the postcard encounter by focusing on the flow of materials and goods in and out of the expanding commercial port of Townsville. The same port which began as the *raison d'etre* of the new Queensland colonial settlement planted in Wulgurukaba and Bindal land and sea countries in 1864 (Gibson-Wilde 1984), the port of entry in 1875 of my great-grandmother Ellen Carroll from a hemisphere away, and the port of entry of the Round Table postcard as shipped mail more than twenty-five years later. The same bay-bounded port I had regularly sailed in and out of on vessels, and that same rapidly expanding contemporary industrial port that I had begun flying over and photographing in return fielding trips as part of my research trace.

The port projecting into Cleveland Bay now operates as the Port of Townsville Limited, a Government Owned Corporation established in its current form in 2008, and, as Queensland's third largest multi-commodity port, self reports as 'a primary sea link to the … minerals and agricultural regions, industrial heartlands, and regional population' of northern Queensland (Port of Townsville 2013b). Sea-borne trade is carried out by twenty shipping lines that operate out of Townsville (Port of Townsville 2013a, 2013b). In a 2011/2012 snapshot of activity, the highest percentage of imports (34%) comprised mineral resources, servicing three major metals refineries in the Townsville district. Refined minerals (24 %) and agriculture (mainly sugar: 24 %), dominated the port's export load. The single largest material import into the port in 2011/2012 was Nickel ore; the largest export tonnage in 2011/12 was Sugar, followed by Fertiliser, Magnetite (Iron Ore), Zinc and Lead. Seven hundred and forty-seven sea-going cargo vessels arrived in the port in 2011/2012, the highest number for a decade (Port of Townsville 2013c).

My focus in this case study was on progressively collating a complete list of names of other ports connected directly to the Townsville port itself, by identifying the departure and destination points of sea-going commercial ships to and from Townsville. This was devised as a way to glean and gather a list of portal shadow places of physical interconnection and material and economic flow in and out of the portal of my affective place. Commercial shipping movements made temporarily available online as part of general disclosure by the Port Of Townsville as Shipping Reports were traced on a weekly basis between October

2011 and July 2013: I followed the shipping movements in and out of port for ninety-three weeks over the twenty-two month span.[3] I focused on the named 'Previous Port' for incoming vessels, and 'Next Port' for outgoing vessels from Townsville. Only commercial vessels with import or export cargoes were included; arriving and departing passenger cruise ships were excluded in this gathering process.[4]

One hundred and twenty-two (120) port shadow places from twenty-five (25) countries were identified across the two years of this trace. This roll call of shadow port place names is presented below in Figure 6.2, and in pulse mode as a moving passage in *A_ShadowPlace_Toponymy*.ppsx in the thesis portfolio. Meet the shadow places there.

[3] These are posted online by the Port of Townsville: http://www.townsville-port.com.au/

[4] My roll call of shadow ports includes all those found and tracked down from the posted shipping data, and includes both source and destination ports of import and export. Within this list, the precise function of a handful of ports visited by trading ships with unlisted cargoes was not ascertained; some may serve as connecting/ re-fuelling stop-over ports en route. Nevertheless, in my interpretation, these are still entangled in the system of material and energy flow that ecologically and economically connects with my affective locale, and is part of its/ my expanded ecological footprint.

Figure 6.2. A Shadow Toponymy for Townsville – Currumbilbarra – Thul Garrie Waja: 120 port names and 25 countries of shipping connection between October 2011 and July 2013.

Antofagasta	*Chile*
Antwerpen	*Belgium*
Auckland	*Aotearoa New Zealand*
Baie Ugue	*New Caledonia*
Bataan – Mariveles	*Philippines*
Baton Rouge	*USA*
Beihai	*China*
Bing Bong	*Northern Territory, AU*
Bintulu, Sarawak	*Malaysia*
Bluff	*Aotearoa New Zealand*
Botany Bay	*New South Wales, AU*
Brisbane	*Queensland, AU*
Broome	*Western Australia, AU*
Cairns	*Queensland, AU*
Cagayan	*Philippines*
Callao	*Peru*
Cape Town	*South Africa*
Changsu	*China*
Chiba	*Japan*
Chittagong	*Bangladesh*
Cigading	*Indonesia*
Crockett	*USA*
Daikoku Island	*Japan*
Dalian	*China*
Darwin	*Northern Territory, AU*
Davao, Mindanao	*Philippines*
Fangcheng	*China*
Fujairah	*United Arab Emirates*
Geelong	*Victoria, AU*

Gladstone	*Queensland, AU*
Guangzhou	*China*
Hachinohe	*Japan*
Haikou	*China*
Haiphong	*Vietnam*
Hibikinada	*Japan*
Hiroshima	*Japan*
Hitachinaka	*Japan*
Ho Chi Minh City	*Vietnam*
Hong Kong	*China*
Hobart	*Tasmania, AU*
Houston	*USA*
Huangpu	*China*
Ichihara	*Japan*
Iloilo (Panay)	*Philippines*
Inchon	*South Korea*
Isabel	*Philippines*
Jubail	*Saudi Arabia*
Kanda	*Japan*
Kaohsiung	*Taiwan*
Karembé	*New Caledonia*
Karumba	*Queensland, AU*
Kashima	*Japan*
Kawasaki	*Japan*
Keelung/Chilung	*Taiwan*
Kendari	*Indonesia*
Kiunga	*Papua New Guinea*
Kobe	*Japan*
Kouaoua	*New Caledonia*
Kwinana	*Western Australia, AU*
Lae	*Papua New Guinea*
Laem Chabang	*Thailand*
Lanshan	*China*
Lianyungang	*China*
Mackay	*Queensland, AU*

Manila	*Philippines*
Manuran	*Indonesia*
Melbourne	*Victoria, AU*
Mizushima	*Japan*
Nagoya	*Japan*
Nakety	*New Caledonia*
Nanjing	*China*
New Orleans	*USA*
New Plymouth	*Aotearoa New Zealand*
Ngoma	*Unknown*
Noumea	*New Caledonia*
Omaezaki	*Japan*
Ozamis	*Philippines*
Panama – Ciudad de	*Panama*
Phu My	*Vietnam*
Pohnpei	*Micronesia*
Poro	*New Caledonia*
Port Alma	*Queensland, AU*
Port Hedland	*Western Australia, AU*
Port Kembla	*New South Wales, AU*
Port Moresby	*Papua New Guinea*
Port Pirie	*South Australia, AU*
Portland	*Victoria, AU*
Prai (Penang)	*Malaysia*
Prony Bay	*New Caledonia*
Pusan	*South Korea*
Pyeongtaek	*South Korea*
Qingdao	*China*
Qinhuangdao	*China*
Rayong	*Thailand*
Red Dog	*USA (Alaska)*
Saganoseki	*Japan*
Shanghai	*China*
Shikama	*Japan*
Singapore	*Singapore*

Stockton	*USA*
Su-ao	*Taiwan*
Subic Bay	*Philippines*
Surigao	*Philippines*
Sydney	*New South Wales*
Tagonoura	*Japan*
Taichung	*Taiwan*
Taizhou	*China*
Tauranga	*Aotearoa New Zealand*
Timaru	*Aotearoa New Zealand*
Tonda	*Japan*
Tontouta	*New Caledonia*
Toronto	*Canada*
Ulsan	*South Korea*
Vancouver	*Canada*
Yizheng	*China*
Yokohama	*Japan*
Yosu-bando	*South Korea*
Zhangjiagang	*China*
Zhanjiang	*China*
Zhenjiang	*China*

The list composes a new onomasticon of shadow place names, adding to the original Wulgurukaba and Bindal naming of countries, Currumbilbarra and Thul Garrie Waja respectively, and the colonial Queensland government's naming of the port town in 1866 (Gibson-Wilde 1984; Townsville City Council 2010). I think of this roll call of shadow port names as one collection, one creative interpretation, and one potential enunciation of the material and ecological shadows of the country of postcard_*affectus*. As a situated worlding in thinking and making activated by Plumwood's critically rich argument, my toponymy of shadow places discloses a previously unknown globally-dispersed 'shadow country' of material-economic-ecological interconnectedness—an expanded ecological footprint of the affective locale of my project. The shadow toponymy/ country is a first foray into creatively

thinking about the shadows of affective emplacement in synergy with my vocabulary of affective objects, images and ensemblages composed so far in the research trace. As I describe below, this new composition also became a part of new ensemblage-making in the passage of postcard_*affectus*.

6.4 Composing with the Shadow Toponymy: the ensemblage *Pulse-Pause 2013*

A rendition of this shadow places research was exhibited in a new ensemblage titled *Pulse-Pause 2013*, at the first EcoArts Australis Conference, 'The Arts and Environmental Sustainability' at the University of Wollongong in May 2013 (Boscacci 2013; Curtis & Aguilar 2013). The abstract of the work is presented in Figure 6.3, below. The encounter ensemblage, staged on and around a re-purposed, free-standing wooden voting booth recovered from a recycling centre, interplayed an illuminated photographic duratrans of a photoshard from the *Becoming Shard Country* series (Chapter Five), a thirty-minute loop of soundings recorded in remnant wetland on the edge of Currumbilbarra-Townsville (Chapter Four), and a continuous digital scroll of the shadow port toponymy. The portable solar trunk (Appendix E) powered the electrical components over the two-day event. The one-off gathering was another syncopation of pulse and pause compositions—a flow of sound and shadow place names with a stilled, lit shard image, all reliant on stored solar energy. Devised as a poetic translation of new work for a busy conference setting, it is my first ensemblage that manifests a local worlding of the shadows trace inspired by Plumwood's rich philosophical oeuvre.

Pulse – Pause: Exploring Eco-ethical Aesthetics in the Shadow Places

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Abstract

There is no 'One True Place', the ecophilosopher Val Plumwood cogently argued in her recent concept of Shadow Places.[1] The Heideggerian notion of *dwelling* and the vernacularised, oft-used *sense of place* are inadequate to account for a contemporary age of interconnectedness. All places have their 'shadows', the multiple, disregarded places of material and ecological support that are likely to elude our knowledge and responsibility. Looking for, listening to, and naming the Shadow Places of a home place, or places of attachment and biological dependency, opens a space to explore a fuller eco-ethical understanding of one's own enmeshment in the localised Anthropocene. How to approach the Shadows? This eco-art research[2] set out to name places of connection to the Australian dry tropics city of Townsville by tracking the shipping movements through its port. Systematically collected over the past two years, these places now compose an unfolding, ever-growing roll call. This, in turn, has created a portal to new investigations and interpretations underway. In September 2011 as part of the project, I daily attended the morning and evening twilight zones of remnant wetlands on the city's coastal edge—to walk, watch and listen. One serendipitously affective encounter, in pulses of overhead sound and life form, was the bio-traffic of thousands of Magpie Geese arriving at dawn from the south. This was a shadow event itself, an ephemeral passage just out of sight and earshot to most in the booming city of 200,000 people.

Pulse-Pause 2013 is one encounter installation from this Shadow Places project. Collected, stored solar radiation from the Illawarra Highlands powers the image-sound artwork.

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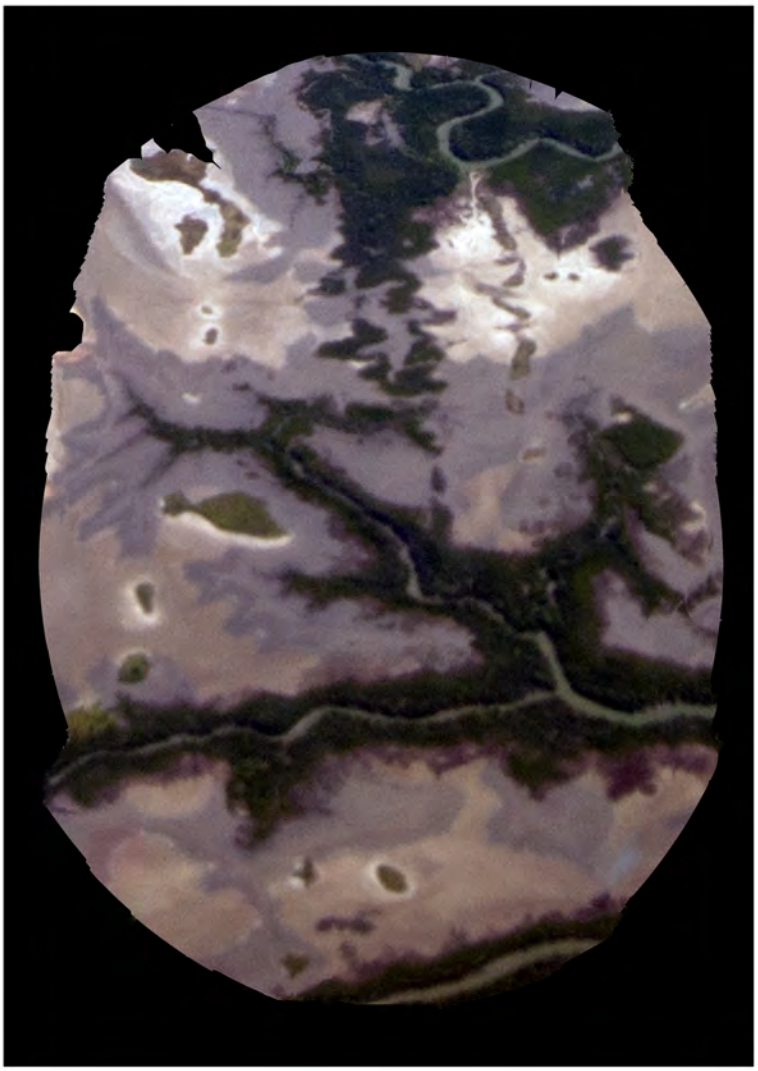
[1] Plumwood V, 2008, 'Shadow Places and the Politics of Dwelling', *Australian Humanities Review*, March, pp1-9; http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-March-2008/plumwood.html

[2] *Finding the Round Table Place: An Illuminated Archive of Affect*. DCA Research Project in progress, Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, 2013.



***Oolbun shard*, 2013**. Detail from the installation *Pulse - Pause 2013*. Duratrans 39 x 42 cm illuminated by a portable solar power source. Other elements: field recorded sonic passages from a dry tropical remnant wetland at twilight, and a digital roll call of 106 shadow place names. Photograph: Louise Boscacci

Figure 6.3: Abstract (text and image) from the ensemblage *Pulse-Pause 2013* (Boscacci 2013). Exhibited at *EcoArts* 2013, Innovation Centre, University of Wollongong, Australia, 12–13 May, 2013.

6.5 Lengthening and Deepening the Shadows

I opened this chapter with an aerial aspect of the expanding Townsville port works photographed in December 2011. In my account so far, I have focused on the idea and actualisation of the shadow toponymy from the shadow ports trace. The roll call of one hundred and twenty port names is a snapshot in the timespan of the project, but it continues to grow as I continue to collect and add new names in step with the growing port itself. Visible in the photograph of Figure 6.1 is the angled line of a new access road to the port, freshly transecting the old coastal buffer of woodlands, claypans, mangroves and creeks in the arc of Cleveland Bay.[5] Not as starkly apparent in this aerial image is the half-completed bridge newly spanning the mouth of the Ross River connecting the road to the port, which was completed and opened during my shadows trace in November 2012 (Anthony Albanese 2012). The shadow toponymy is a b(l)oom mode, as much as the Round Table postcard's port of arrival is a rapidly expanding industrial field in Cleveland Bay, part of a twenty-five to thirty year expansion plan begun in 2007 (Port of Townsville Limited 2012a). Far from the mangrove creek straggle of warehouses and wooden jetty planted in Currumbilbarra country in 1864 to service the colonial land expropriations in the hinterland by pastoral speculator Melton Black and entrepreneur Robert Towns, and later the serendipitous boom of the district's goldfields, the port continues to burgeon as a commercial enterprise. The sustained expansion I witnessed and was compelled to photograph, is linked to a forecast trebling of port trade over the next twenty years and beyond, economic activity predicted to accompany new mineral extraction projects in the Queensland Northwest Minerals Province, planned new coal mines in the northern Galilee Basin, and the expansion of the coal port of Abbot Point near Bowen, 200 kilometres south of Townsville (Port of Townsville Limited 2012a, 2012b). A doubling of the existing area of the coastal port projecting into Cleveland Bay, another one hundred hectares of new land-making, is projected as part of the construction of a new outer harbour which will accommodate new bulk carriers moving into and out of Cleveland Bay (Port of Townsville Limited 2012b; Port of Townsville 2014).

Also accompanying this name tracking and collecting has been my deepening focus on mineral ores imported into the Currumbilbarra-Townsville region that have particular

[5] This connects to the Townsville State Development Area, 4900 hectares southeast of the city declared in 2003 as the designated site in North Queensland for industrial development of regional, state and national significance (Port of Townsville Limited 2012a).

relevance to my material ceramics practice: nickel-cobalt and zinc. These ores are destined for two major metal refineries sited locally.[6] Cobalt is a mainstay of ceramic blacks and blues; certain porcelain lightenings described in Chapter Four carry the refined form melted into their surface skins. Zinc, refined as an oxide, is an excellent glaze whitener, even if I use it more sparingly than cobalt. I want to flag this deepening of the shadow trace analysis, whereby tracking shadow ports where these ores are loaded from nearby source mines in the Australasian and Pacific region has also begun to reveal a truer picture of the extent of the ecological footprint of place and practice—and of this affective trace. This investigative and aesthetic direction in research continues as an intersectional space of affect, ecology and materiality that I am elaborating in work in progress.[7] 'What are the shadow places of my practice?' is a new provocation for my choices of materials, processes and energy sources as an artist-researcher.

6.6 Archive of Aerial Leavings: Wit(h)ness Port Archive 2011–2014

In the flighted leavings at the end of research trips, photographing the riverbowl city, and the nexus of river, creek and port became a project of wit(h)ness—one of systematic visual documentation and a refrain of renewed looking. A collection of aerial digital photographs of the expanding contemporary port was produced from these photography sessions. As a serendipitous visual project that evolved during the research passage, and as I recognised in Chapter Five, these snatched images are as much processual compositions from affective place as my studio renditions of porcelain *lightenings* and river bowls. I end this section, and leave the port, with a visual sequence of images selected from the research collection of digital photographs *Archive of Leavings* (2011–2014). Enter this departure sequence in: *A_Passage_of_Port_Leavings_2011-2014*.ppsx.

[6] Nickel and cobalt co-occur as a mixed ore, and separation and refining processes for both are undertaken at The Townsville Palmer Nickel and Cobalt Refinery (Queensland Nickel) at Yabulu, north of the city (Fittock 2007). Zinc-lead ores are refined at the Sun Metals Corporation zinc refinery on Cleveland Bay (http://www.sunmetals.com.au).

[7] By shadow mapping the situatedness and lines of flow of these materials, the trace continues.

6.7 An Expanded Breath: The shadows trace in an eco-affective ethics of emplacement

The shadow places trace is an *eco-affective trace*. It is a becoming of a meeting of the affective and the ecological in my trace of the postcard encounter. It takes seriously the entanglement of affective emplacement and its ecological discontents. It is a becoming of being 'told' by a-bodied affect that this emplacement is, rather, *belonged-by-ness*. This is belonging now understood and embraced as being belonged-by, not a claim, not a seeking. Embracing and wording this knowledge as a creative intensity was key to first imagining and then actualising the shadows trace as a new transversal move in my thinking and making, a new modality still at work in the bloom space of my shadow toponymy.

My ports case study is a time-rich, evidence-based ecological investigation. Stripped back to the final list of place names and exhibited in pulse mode as a visual enunciation, it coheres as a new 'right fit' becoming in my practice: an investigative modality can also become a poetic form in translation. The *shadows trace* is a satisfying mode of curiosity and movement and holds great potential for new research and pedagogical projects beyond my postcard's passage: tracking, naming, visualising, listening for, hearing, documenting, mapping, enunciating and investigating the shadow places of material and ecological support and connection for any *locus*, not just the country of postcard_*affectus*. Mapped worldings of the situated sources and flows of materials identified in the naming and locating of shadow places—shadow mapping—extends this wit(h)ness work. As I have demonstrated in my composition of the shadow toponymy as the first rendition of the port study, shadow tracing opens a pathway for projects of emplacement and belonging *beyond*, but *without dismissing*, as Plumwood (2008) expresses, 'rhapsody about nice places, or about nice times (epiphanies) in nice places'. In my trace of postcard_*affectus*, belonged-by country invokes attuned reciprocity. As articulated in relation to the exhibition ensemblage *Pulse-Pause 2013*, looking for, listening to, and naming the shadow places of a home place, or places of attachment and biological dependency, opens a space to explore a fuller eco-ethical understanding of one's own enmeshment in the localised Anthropocene. 'How to enter the shadows?' now becomes a fruitful question for any body in any place.

What can a body do? In my encounterings, the affective is never disconnected from the ecological dimensions of emplacement—of being a-bodied 'somewhere'. Even if my feet are embedded in the sticky clays of a remnant dry tropical wetland, the autonomic intake

and release of breath by my lungs simultaneously happens in a shared borderless planetary blue chamber of atmosphere, a collective 'everywhere'. If both bodies and idiolocal places require the ecological and material support services of other 'somewheres', an expanded ethics of emplacement and 'belonging' is seeded. This is an affective and ecological ethics: *an eco-affective ethics of emplacement*. This is a creative ethics that 'listens' to the ebb and flow of affective forces and intensities. And one that recognises the ecological and material shadows of connected, situated planetary places that also oxygenate, feed, or economically support daily existence—the daily affective existence that also feeds creative practice. This has implications for me as an artist-maker, for the material and energy choices of my practice in an age of anthropogenic climate change and ecological exhaustion (Berardi 2009).

6.8 Conclusion

The affective and the ecological are intimately linked. The autonomically-attuned, synsensorial, intellectual activations of *belonged-by place* cannot be disconnected from ecological emplacement. Affective emplacement asks questions of its ecological connections and material dependencies. Affective emplacement *activates, implores, compels* the question of reciprocity as an eco-ethical dimension of being 'belonged by' this 'somewhere' that is interconnected with other 'somewheres' and is simultaneously inseparable from the borderless 'everywhere' of planetary atmosphere.

Plumwood's (2008) ecophilosophical concept of Shadow Places challenges thinking about emplacement in uncritical vocabularies of 'sense of place', 'home place', 'dwelling', and 'belonging' that ignore ecological connectedness with other idiolocal places, even if they are not readily visible or easily disclosed. It is, I contend, one that engenders new creative potential by making connection between affective and ecological dimensions of emplacement—a transversal (Guattari 1995) that cross-connects affect and critical ecological consciousness.

I have drawn on the concept of shadow places to concretely explore the meeting of belonged-by place and critical ecological consciousness via a case study of the port of Townsville: globally-dispersed ports of shipping connection reveal a shadow country of material, ecological, and economic support and interconnection. The creative modality of *the shadow place trace and analysis—the shadows trace*—seeking and tracing out the

shadow places of one's idiolocal 'somewhere' home, or one's own art production—is a generative and timely injunction of situated practice. I perceive great potential for new interpretations of the modality in practice-research and pedagogy in the meeting of ecology, affect and art.

An expanded conception of the ethical call of affective emplacement—of a *belonged-by ethics* that explicitly connects affective emplacement with its ecological and material supporting shadows—has been seeded by this passage of shadow places research. I have come to articulate this as an *eco-affective ethics of emplacement*. This movement in my thinking and praxis is also the synthetic, synergistic work of affect, the *syn-work* of the doings and becomings of my affective encounter with the one hundred year old Round Table postcard.

Chapter Seven

Pulse_Pause: what becomes in refrain

> Art is the process of producing refrains, the creation of tuned rhythms.
>
> (Berardi 2009, p135)

7.1 The emergent refrain

What might an object do; undo? What might a movement become? *A pause and a pulse* is how I introduced the Round Table postcard and its triggering of affective movement that animated these questions in Chapter One. I alluded to the stilled image-object as a material 'pause', and my experience of the a-bodied movement of the provocation as a 'pulse' of autonomic, generative flow. This vocabulary did not automatically accompany those fleeting moments of postcard_*affectus,* in the room of the Archive at #75. It emerged en route in my trace of the encounter and its passage of forces and intensities as research-composition; what the object encounter catalysed, before long, returned to word it in the tied lexical relation of a pause and a pulse.

Thus, a process of emergence and echoing can be found in the preceding chapters:

> – the first elicitation of the word 'pulse' by the cardiac-like throbbing of the rising sun in Currumbilbarra country, as seen through the searching autofocus lens of a digital video camera. This serendipitous visual artifact of morning twilight was a powerful image that resonated with the embodied jolt of postcard_*affectus*.
>
> – the pulse and pause teachings of magpie geese in waves of flight over my head in the Currumbilbarra remnant wetlands where I waited in morning twilight, pulsing and pausing in movement and stilled anticipation in synchrony with the rhythm of their incoming aerial passages.
>
> – a resonance of the Wet_Dry cadence of the dry tropics of affective country embodied over long attunement: a stark seasonal oscillation between the flood of rain and its absence.

– the pulse and pause rhythmic cycles of making large bowl forms with flowing plastic clay on a turning wheel.

– a visual 'echo' of pulses and pauses in the digital edits of soundings and their wave patterns as spikes of aural flow, followed by interludes of silence, with each recording being temporally idiosyncratic.

Pulse_pause, a rhythmic relation 'heard' by a-bodied encountering, and echoed, returned to and thought about, emerged as a compositional becoming in my research trace. This crystallisation in thought—a process of realising and naming—was not immediate or willed. In time, the pulse_pause became a meter of the postcard encounter, and its passage of forces and intensities: a repeated rhythm and a worded modality returned to over the duration of my trace, each time collecting and accruing new allusion and strengthening in resonance and its insistence as a 'right fit' co-traveller and translator of synchronies of new encounters. *Pulse_pause* became a chorus of return in the research passage, a repetition within continuing flow like a refrain is the chorus of a song, a *ritornello* cycled back to and sung again or a repeated verse occurring at intervals in the unfolding of a poem. *Pulse_pause* is the refrain of the passage of postcard_*affectus*.

7.2 Affect and Guattari's Refrain

I did not set out to find or make a refrain called *pulse_pause,* but its emergence and my use of it in this project chimes with Félix Guattari's concept of the refrain, a key element in his 'logic of affects' and the ethico-aesthetic paradigm metamodelled as Schizoanalysis in *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Guattari 1995). Indeed, to Guattari artistic creation *is* the production of refrains, 'perceptive tunings of a peculiar kind, which are constantly on the run, and incessantly renewing themselves'. Art is, no less, 'the process of producing refrains, the creation of tuned rhythms' (Berardi 2009, p135).[1]

I respond to Guattari's refrain as a concept that intersects with practice: as a rhythmic operation that connects with a moment of emergence out of chaos—or infinite potential, which is virtual and transient; such a moment, for me, is exemplified by the fleeting, triggering postcard encounter and its bloom net of affective provocation. The refrain helps

[1] I draw on Franco Berardi as a poetic interpreter of Félix Guattari's writing on affect and the refrain, particularly as it pertains to art and artistic production in the ethico-aesthetic paradigm.

to ‘make sense’ of the moments of an affective encounter, and to navigate the movements launched from it, catalysed by it. It ‘maps’ *temporary* configurations of heterogeneous materials and elements: it territorialises, as a ‘singular crystallisation of time’ (O’Sullivan 2010, p282). But the refrain also deterritorialises: it undoes and reconfigures relations of elements continuously. In the ethico-aesthetic practice of an artist, the refrain gathers together affective forces and movements conditioned by one’s own idiosyncratic, embodied attunement (subjectivation), and in turn, produces ‘the roads we travel’— it animates new iterations of thinking-making-doing that nevertheless are always interconnected by virtue of a particular refrain (Berardi 2009, p136).

As Guattari reminds us, an affect is not a passively endured state; it is the site of a work, of potential praxis (Bertelsen and Murphie 2010). Once ‘heard’ and named, the refrain of *pulse_pause* began to feed back into and energise my practice as an organising and harmonising modality. I began to think in terms of new compositional pulses and pauses, and imagined and gathered these into permutations and synchronies as ensemblages of pauses and pulses for new gallery encounters: *Archive Place (Twilight)* (2012), *Pulse_Pause* (2013), and the group of river bowls and their soundings that composes the *In the Riverbowl* series (2013). I described these ensemblages of material pauses and immaterial/ ephemeral pulses in Chapters Four, Five and Six. To invoke one example, the crystallised ceramic object rendered as stilled (and a stilling of) movement is a material pause, and a fluid passage of sound collected from Currumbilbarra country is a pulse. This is the processual, practice-based worlding of the affective by the emergence and *use* of an artistic refrain.

The ethico-aesthetic power and potential of a refrain, for me as an artist-researcher, hums with the recognition that its work of gathering and translating affective forces and intensities is ‘cross-modal’ and ‘intertemporal’, that the power of the refrain ‘resides in a powerful, creative, self-organizing transversality’ (Bertelsen & Murphie 2010, p150). My ‘hearing’/ feeling, wording and embrace of pulse_pause to make sense of, or loosely codify, my translation of affective movement into the new compositions and ensemblages was because it became an undeniable, insistent and energising ‘right fit’ in my trace.
This is not an application of a philosophical concept to practice: this is a heeding of emergent a-bodied knowledge. The refrain insisted and persisted, and enhanced my practice. I came to experientially and pragmatically concur with ‘the transversalist artistic refrain evades strict spatio-temporal delimitation’, as Guattari wrote (O’Sullivan 2010,

p282). This renders the refrain a poetic, powerful animator of new transversal moves—new creative lines of flight—in practice. *Pulse_pause* continued its transversalising work in a new, unexpected way during my project.

7.3 Across, Beyond

In a concrete transversal move beyond the studio, gallery and Currumbilbarra country, I used the refrain of *pulse_pause* as the modality of a walk for the Arts-Sciences community-based event SITEWORKS at Bundanon, New South Wales in 2014.[2] This was a guided night walk with a group of twenty-five participants to spotlight search for local, nocturnally-active forest fauna. But, deviating from the well-versed ground-truthing surveys of ecological practice, this was intentionally initiated and modulated as a group pulse and pause and pulse cadence. One of walking flow and focused searching with handheld torches. Then stopping, in silence, in complete darkness to stand, listen and focus the stilled body on the sounds and vocalisations of night others, on a-bodying the immersive, dark energies of the pause. Then, lights on and moving, visually-focused, aurally attentive, once more. The pulse_pause walk was a shared, collective encountering that took on its own pace and inflections of speed and stillness once underway, without feeling forced or contrived. The sudden spotlit encounter with a tree-borne possum or glider became a heightened, quietly respectful and aesthetically pleasurable interlude. A faunal species list for that night—satisfying the aims of the biodiversity survey—was simultaneously generated. In this extension as a modality used in social engagement and pedagogy with an ecology-art-local place focus, the affective refrain further revealed its power to cross modes and space-times in my practice. I am enthused by the potential for new iterations in time, remembering that, curiously, this new cross reach began with a postcard on a table and the unplanned push of the affective.

If an affective encounter's work is also futural, if its generative power also hums with the creation of new ideas and imaginings, new ideal or mental bodies suspended on the leaky boundary between the virtual and the actual, the refrain of *pulse_pause* is an evocative waymaker to be used and explored in my practice beyond the time capture of my project.[3] The refrain, and its latent cross-modal and intertemporal potential, is *always* of the now, the

[2] 'SITEWORKS: Biodiversity', Bundanon Trust, New South Wales: September 27–28, 2014.

[3] 'It is the edge of the virtual, where it leaks into the actual that counts. For that seeping edge is where potential actually is found' (Massumi 1996 in O'Sullivan 2001, p134).

now of this research, as another becoming of my affective trace. It is futural, only in the sense that it is suspended action, another type of paused body. The 'object and movement' relations of this refrain also seed a new meta-modality of thinking, making and doing: one that intones ahead, across, beyond, to 'begin with an object' or 'begin with a movement', and follow where each or both might lead as a mode of situated research-composition. I imagine it as playfully generative in continuing to open out new intersectional spaces of eco-ethico-aesthetic practice and pedagogy. Consider this approach:

> Begin with an object. It might or might not be a powerful provocateur. It might be a hyper-local object of interest; a serendipitous find; an aesthetic curiosity that fits in the hand and lingers in the mind's eye; a troubling wonder. Begin there. It may be enough. Trace that object's material history. Seek out its material and ecological shadows. Hold.
>
> Begin with a movement. The lit spark of an affective moment. Or perhaps, simply the body moving freely in an idiolocal 'somewhere'. Take a walk. In the closest eco-remnant. Pulse and pause. At twilight. In moonless darkness. Tune into fellow other-than-human denizens or 'earth others' (Plumwood 1993, p137). Listen.

7.4 Idio-Refrain

What might an object do; undo? What might a movement become? An ephemeral travelling postcard and its surprising affectivity composed a returning rhythm, an *idio-refrain*, a modality of making-thinking-doing, one already at work and one of vital potential as a waymaker in my practice. It continues its transversal work, casting new materialised and enacted lines of connection between my temporally separate, if never disconnected, art and ecology practices.

Pulse_pause is a compositional 'becoming' of the postcard encounter and its durational passage of intensities and forces—as much as the porcelain photoshard, clay bowl, inter-media ensemblage, and the printed document that carries this thesis.

Pulse_pause is immaterial and virtual as a synchronous refrain, and as concept and potential in extension, yet it emerged, returned in echo and repetition, on each occasion carrying

another sub-tone, another allusionary gathering. It was composed by bodily encountering in a still-powerfully affective idiolocal place, of affective attunement, of an affective synsensorium. It is a making of a-bodied local emplacement. It scores the worlding of creative provocation in new material objects, in collected sounds and images, in exhibited ensembles of affect's work and the processual, empirical studio.

Whilst an idio-refrain of the encounterings, place, materialities and making of this work, it chimes with the rhythm of the body's intake and release of breath. It is a refrain of the vital, attentive body.

It is a refrain that chimes, in after-sight, with Spinoza's nascent 'all bodies are either in movement or at rest', yet it did not begin there. This research tracery of thinking and making could never be that neat; I wonder about this connection now as I write.

It recalls the ebb and flow of affective 'infinities', the virtual transitive forces and intensities of affectual tunings. It carries no fixed pace or durational certainty or stress; each iteration may vary:

> puuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuullllllllllllllllllllllllllsssssssssssssssseeeeeeeee_ pause, *or*
> Paaaaaaaaaauuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuussssssssssssssssssseeeeeeeeeee_pullllllllllllllse, *or*
> pulse_pause_pulse_pause_pulse_pause_pulse_pause_pulse_pause …… *pause*

PART B

The following chapter, Chapter Eight, emerged as a research-compositional trace within the larger trace of postcard_affectus. It was sparked whilst reflecting on the idea and lexicon of image-objects, and the intersectional potential of objects, encounters and affectivities as canvassed in Chapters Two and Three. I include it here as a generative becoming of the Round Table postcard encounter.

Chapter Eight

After-Affect Skin Songs: rewriting affective dimensions of mammal species loss

8.1 Overture

The route from ecological places and the ecological space of thought to *affectus* /*affectio* in a compositional pathway scores a refrain of after-affect. At the edge of Maralinga-Tjarutja lands, Anangu elders reached out to take museum skins of desert mammals disappeared from both Country, and continent. As a scientist collaborator with these senior informants, the aim was to glean and gather collective knowledge for both community and the biogeographic record. What was not written was the profound emotional and intellectual provocation of these skin objects for elder women who had not seen the animals for decades yet retained specialist knowledge of biology, behavior and cultural emplacement in songs. What was not recorded, except in private field journals and anecdotal debriefings, was the shared grief of this encounter by the mammalogist-provocateurs. Both are humming lacunae in accounts of species loss. Whose voices should write new ecological histories? How to author the voices of deceased Indigenous custodians of ecological knowledge? In invoking 'the affective' as a lens of return analysis, and given the entanglement of affect, emotion, sensation and action in contemporary transdisciplinary discourse, which affect/s?

8.2 To Mark, Make the Trace, Make a Sound

> Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something (Butler 2004, p23).

To mark, make the trace, make a sound, arrives as an injunction in the face of loss, the philosopher Judith Butler (2014a) proposes. The aim of this account is to begin to explore little acknowledged, under-articulated and unvoiced affective dimensions of Australian mammal species loss—disappearances and extinctions—by returning to and describing a past seminal encounter event when 'embedded' in field research as a mammalogist. I begin with this intense provocation.

The account is situated, firstly, in a larger context of the historical, contemporary and predicted *imminent* extinctions of distinctive Australian mammal species. Twenty-nine austral species, of an original fauna of 315, have entered the extinction record in the preceding 225 years since the commencement of the British project of expropriation and colonisation. More than one third have now disappeared, and another fifty-six mammal species are currently threatened with continental-wide extinction. Indeed, as zoologists Woinarski and Ziembicki warn (Woinarski et al. 2011; Ziembicki, Woinarski & Mackey 2013), and echoed in a recent impassioned essay by Tim Flannery (2012), a new second wave of mammal extinctions in northern Australia is gathering.[1] However, thirty years ago in the mid-1980s, and in response to the detected rapid disappearances of desert mammals that had been holding out in central, largely remote arid lands, and informed by traditional Aboriginal owners who were patently aware of the growing disappearances, zoologist Andrew Burbidge and colleagues initiated a three year project to interview Elders emplaced in homeland desert communities about their knowledge of local mammals (Burbidge et al. 1988). The aim was to gather and analyse, and in time to share back to participants, any information about these mammals before the Elder custodians themselves died, and the knowledge also left with them. Corollary aims were to arrest or slow further species losses, and potentially inform future re-introduction projects. At the time, I was involved as a mammalogist in a three-year biological survey of the Australian Nullarbor (Boscacci et al. 1987), and it was in this situation that I participated in the research program.

Second, this contemporary 'revisit' of the encounter-exchange, as I now refer to it, was sparked in the context of my current research in the creative arts in tracing affective impingements—punctuated encounters—and the role of objects and image-objects as affective triggers. So, thirty years later this research account becomes situated amidst a contemporary bloom of 'affect' scholarship in the humanities, or 'the affective turn' in the lexicon of Patricia Clough (Clough & Halley 2007).

But what is meant here by the terminology of 'affect' and 'affective'? Before proceeding, I want to return to my survey of recent affect theory and scholarship across disciplines of the humanities and the affective sciences (from Chapter Three). Theorists Gregg and Seigworth

[1] The complex medley of factors at play in this unfinished history of extinctions is usefully analysed and discussed by McKenzie et al. (2007). My account in this chapter was written in 2014.

(2010) distilled two principal vectors of theory and entangled meanings of 'affect' and 'affective'. One, that of the emotions, derived from the affect theory of Silvan Tomkins. Two, affect understood not as sentiment or feelings, but in terms of forces of encounter, intensities, and capacities of enhancement or diminishment (Deleuze & Guattari 1987; Massumi 2002; Clough & Halley 2007). My angle of approach to date has engaged with the latter Spinozan-Deleuzian *affectus*/ *affectio* philosophically-inflected vector, and the creative-critical possibilities of thinking, making, and enacting new processual and compositional traces ('becomings') from affective encounters, objects and atmos-place-spheres. Here, in this account, I intentionally use the words 'emotional' and 'emotion' where I am specifically referring to that meaning of 'affective' and 'affect' in describing responses and reflections on loss.[2]

So, moving with this conceptual-creative trajectory of *affectus/ affectio*, I ask and begin to explore anew: What did this encounter do, what has it become, what might it become? I begin with the original encounter-exchange, a profoundly affective meeting as described from my original field journals. I shall return to also sketch out some *doings, undoings and becomings of* this provocative event, its trajectories and the unfinished, generative nature of its passage in the present day—in a vocabulary I am proposing as *after-affect*. Re-sparked in the present, thirty years later and in the context of practice-based arts research, it became clear that I had not finished with the original encounter-exchange, nor it with me.

8.3 Past Disappearances and Contemporary Forebodings

> Since European settlement, the deepest loss of Australian biodiversity has been the spate of extinctions of endemic mammals (Fitzsimons et al. 2010, p2).

To take a step back, this account and its originating research is situated in a broader context of the historical, contemporary, and imminent-unfinished passages of Australian mammal extinctions. Twenty-two terrestrial (or land-based) mammals have become extinct in the 225 years since British expropriation and colonisation activities officially commenced in 1788. Eight species that once lived on the mainland now only persist on offshore islands (McKenzie et al. 2007; Burbidge et al. 2009). This is the worst mammal extinction rate worldwide in recent historic times, accounting for almost half of the forty-two mammals that have disappeared globally in the past two centuries (Johnson 2006), and 28 percent of

[2] See Chapter Three for a fuller discussion of Spinozan-Deleuzian affect.

known mammal extinctions since 1600 AD (McKenzie et al. 2007). As Flannery (2012) writes tellingly, the attrition of the distinctive Australian ground-dwelling mammal fauna began shortly after 1788, exemplified by complete disappearance, in the first sixty years, of the beautiful, soft-furred, grey and white White-footed Rabbit-Rat from the woodlands stretching from Brisbane to Adelaide. However, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, it had become evident that a catastrophic, widespread decline in the original and distinctive mammal fauna of southern and central Australia had taken place from the 1890s to about the 1950s or 1960s in more remote desert locales (Burbidge et al. 1988; McKenzie et al. 2007). The mammals most represented in the inventories of disappearances were small to medium-sized species many of which were marsupials, having a weight range between 35 and 5500 grams, or 'kitten to hare-sized' species (Flannery 2012, p8) such as the bandicoots, rat-kangaroos, small wallabies, as well as native rodents such as hopping-mice.

Conservation biologists McKenzie et al. have retrospectively analysed the patterns of regional first wave extinctions in relation to 'the medley of factors that have transformed the ecology of this continent over the last 200 years' (2007, p598). A fuller discussion can be found there. Their stated focus was to further clarify the processes that had contributed to the 'historic contraction' of the distinctive Australian mammal fauna in order to enhance 'our chances of nurturing what remains', but comment that that these factors 'still operate across Australia's landscapes, in some cases with unprecedented severity' (2007, p598).

Indeed, Woinarski et al. (2010; 2011) and Ziembicki, Woinarski and Mackey (2013) now extend the warning and dire prognosis of a second contemporary wave of extinctions in northern Australia. Most recently, Flannery (2012, p9) has written of 'the gathering second extinction wave' in allusion to both the threats to northern Australia mammal biodiversity, and the emptying out of mammal faunas previously assumed 'secure' in the national and state reserve systems in other bioregions of the continent. In his extended, exploratory and impassioned essay, Flannery expresses the imminence of new losses as 'dismaying' (p9), a 'saga of ignorance, folly and malice' (2012, p15), and states that 'Australian politics and the bureaucracy that supports it, is failing in one of its most fundamental obligations … the conservation of our natural heritage' (p15). He rues that '(t)he growing selfishness of some Australians, and the spurning of environmental values that goes with it, is *a temporary madness* for which future generations will despise us' (Flannery 2012, p77).

8.4 Museum Mammal Skins and Oral Testimonies

> The mammal fauna of the central deserts and adjacent areas had suffered a massive and sudden loss of much of its mammal fauna, since European colonization, probably unparalleled in extent elsewhere in the world (Burbidge et al. 1988, p10).

Between 1982 and 1985, in response to the detected first wave of extinctions, zoologist Andrew Burbidge and colleagues undertook a research program in the central Australian deserts and adjoining regions to consult with Aboriginal traditional elders about their knowledge of homeland mammals—those species still extant in country, and those known to have disappeared in recent times. They wrote:

> To Aborigines living in the deserts during the decline, the mammals were both a source of food and an integral part of their culture, and much information is available from verbal communication with elderly Aborigines still living in the deserts (Burbidge and Fuller 1979, 1984; Johnson and Roff 1982). We decided, therefore, that it was urgent that we document what desert people know about the mammals of their traditional lands, especially in relation to the extinct and rare species, before this information is lost through the death of the older people (Burbidge et al. 1988, pp10–11).

Scientific researchers and communicators concerned primarily with biogeographic documentation and species conservation, they nevertheless were prompted to articulate, briefly, that:

> This loss is not only of concern to scientists and conservationists; it is shared by the Aboriginal people with whom we have worked. … They are greatly saddened by the disappearance of the culturally important species and are keen to see them rehabilitated. Often, Aborigines blamed themselves for the disappearance of a species because they ceased to perform the relevant ceremonies after they had left their traditional lands for European missions or settlements (Burbidge et al. 1988, p36).

Burbidge and colleagues adopted the animal skin-oral history interview technique innovated by the chemist, mammalogist and museum curator H. H. Finlayson, who began consulting Aboriginal traditional owners about mammals in central Australia in the 1930s (Finlayson 1961). Most recently zoologists Ziembicki, Woinarski and colleagues have used taxidermy skins, mammal props (mounted whole mammals) and photographs in a four-year study involving interviews and exchanges with Indigenous traditional owners in Northern Australia (Ziembicki, Woinarski & Mackey 2013).

8.5 My Involvement

I was involved in one 'skins' research trip in August-September 1984. As a researcher in a large-scale biological inventory of the Nullarbor region begun earlier that year, I was collating knowledge of the historical presence and patterning of mammals at the time of the European land explorations and expropriations for pastoralism, township settlements and itinerant economic activities in the nineteenth century (Boscacci et al. 1987). Placed alongside our contemporary findings, it had become evident that a suite of species had become regionally or nationally extinct over this timespan, some more recently than others, and I was attempting to trace individual histories of presence and disappearance for the Nullarbor bioregion. Close to and on the Nullarbor itself, we (my research colleague Philip Fuller and I) had arranged to consult with Aboriginal traditional owners and Elders in three local communities about their local mammal knowledge and their memories of those animals once known but no longer seen in present-day country.[3]

This account re-visits two meetings I now refer to as *encounter-exchanges* with senior Maralinga-Tjarutja Anangu women and men who were camped on traditional homelands near the gated entrance to the prohibited Maralinga Nuclear Tests Area, north of Ooldea, in South Australia. They had relocated from the community base at Yalata, on the Nullarbor to the south, and were awaiting the imminent formal return of—and return to—traditional Maralinga-Tjarutja Lands expropriated for atomic bomb testing more than thirty years previously. Hand-back commenced in January 1985, through to a final stage ('Parcel 400') only recently completed in 2011 (McClelland et al. 1985). There is now available online an extensive archive of information, official reports, media coverage and transcripts of recent events that informs multiple threads of this unfolding story. Most importantly, however, the

[3] Robinson et al. (2003) refer to this as Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

2009 book *Maralinga, the Anangu Story* authored by a working group of senior women from the Yalata and Oak Valley communities—Alice Cox, Margaret May, Pansy Woods, Mabel Queama, Marjorie Sandimar, Yvonne Edwards, Mima Smart, Janet May—in collaboration with writer Christobel Mattingley, gathers and re-presents oral and visual testimonies of first hand experiences and community lore 'to describe what happened in the Maralinga Tjarutja lands of South Australia before the bombs and after' (Yalata, Oak Valley Communities & Mattingley, 2009).

I renewed contact with the Yalata Community from April to June 2014, via phone conversations and correspondence with its CEO Greg Franks, in order to seek permission to retell these stories in a public forum, and in written form. I also asked whom I might name and not name in recounting the participation of senior women in mammal skins interviews.[4] His encouragement and clear guidelines facilitated this full account, and the presentation of an extracted version as a paper at the conference 'Affective Habitus', convened at the Australian National University, Canberra, June 19–21, 2014.[5] The content of the account in this chapter was written in August 1984, December 2012, and April–June, 2014.

8.6 Collaborative Skins talk: Maralinga-Tjarutja Anangu Encounter-Exchange in 1984

The road from Eucla to Yalata was wet. We broke camp south of the Nullarbor roadhouse, on the track to the Cliffs of the Bight, at 6.35 am. Northwards, a Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat scooted across the dirt track from one burrow system to another leaving a trail of dust in its wake. We stopped. A series of '*groans and deep sighs like an old man letting out breath'* emanated from the entrance hole. That is what I wrote in my field journal, a hardback blue Collins notebook, 2310 faint, on August 30, 1984.

Wombats, *Lasiorhinus latifrons* once widespread across the southern coasts of the continent, were prominent on my interest radar. I was a biological survey scientist, a mammalogist, engaged in an expansive two-state biogeographic inventory of the Nullarbor

[4] Approval for this research was also sought and granted by the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee in 2014: Ethics Number HE14/262.

[5] Association for the Study of Literature, Environment & Culture, Australia and New Zealand (ASLEC-ANZ); an Environmental Humanities collaboratory with the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions.

region, a land spread equivalent in scale to the state of Victoria (Boscacci et al. 1987). But on this trip, we were heading to Yalata, then Ooldea on the Trans-Australia Railway line, then north again to the temporary camp of Anangu people from the Yalata community awaiting the return of their traditional lands—and return to their homelands—the Maralinga-Tjaruta lands of South Australia.

We mammalogists, tracking absence as much as presence, had just seven days to complete a travelling circle from Perth, crossing the border into South Australia, then north to the edge of the sandy desert lands in both States. A syncopation of place-names marked the route: Kalgoorlie, Cundelee, Rawlinna, Cocklebiddy, Eucla, Nullarbor, Yalata, Pidinga, Ooldea, Watson, Maralinga, Yalata, Mundrabilla, Madura, Cocklebiddy, Balladonia, Norseman, and back to Wanneroo. We had a tin trunk of museum 'skins' and one 10 x 8 inch black and white photo of a mammal species for which there was no available museum skin.

We began by taking out the animals one by one and handing each to the senior participant-informants[6] to take hold of, and examine and pass to others in the group. When each animal was discussed and finished with, they were laid down on the on the canvas ground sheet. A little assemblage of desert land mammals, most now very rare or extinct on the Australian mainland, was gathering at our feet.

In my field notebook, I had written:

> *Talk large group of old women and men and children at Camp. Old people got excited – one by one skins laid out for them to look/ touch – call by name, tell children. Much talking going on, reverence towards the animals.*
>
> *Didn't know Bettongia penicillata, knew B. lesueur - mitika*
> *Not Chaeropus*

[6] 'Informant' was used to describe Indigenous interviewees by Burbidge et al. (1988); 'consultants/informants' was used by survey biologists Robinson et al. (2003, p15) in more recent co-operative biological surveys with traditional owners and hosts in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands of South Australia. I have added the word 'participant', in the sense of the artist Lygia Clark's 'participant-beholder' (Best 2011, p140), in order to highlight the active role, authority and intentional participation of the Anangu consultants in the encounter described here.

'rock wallaby' for Onychogalea
Tammar ?
Walpurti well known
Bilby, nirnu, well known
Dasycercus well known
Trichosurus, wayurta, well known
Perameles bougainville known but not well
Notoryctes [marsupial mole] known well – always laugh when they see them – 'everywhere' in spinifex country –'pensioners' because blind

Mala well known
Myrmecobius, walpurti – known by all including teenagers and kids ('eats sand'). Interestingly, Onychogalea described as running into hollow log.

'Old lady' joined a little late – became very excited, talkative, eyes popping out at skins – not having seen for so long, since a 'young girl', she said. She knew B. penicillata […]; no-one else sure.

Old lady started crying, hugging skins of mala, wayurta, mitika, bilby, to her breast, crying for them lost, not touched for so long.

I had picked up the bilby skin from the groundsheet where it had been placed and handed it to this senior Anangu woman. She cradled it to her arms and rocked it as if a lost child re-found, crying its language name, and then began to sing, lullaby-like, to it, as she rocked. After the shock, seemingly a mix of grief and happiness and excitement at seeing these animals again, even in their inanimate 'skin' forms, this senior woman was eager to talk about her knowledge of *ninu*, bilbies, from hunting them long ago as a young girl.[7] She had not seen this animal for a 'long time'—not since 'maybe [when aged] 15 or 16'. She did not know her precise age, but 'more than fifty'. She described with actions that *ninu* makes a corkscrew burrow which she and other girls and women dug out. But *ninu* also made more than one burrow in the same spinifex place and if it escaped it could go down another hidden hole nearby and be lost.

[7] *Ninu* was the recorded spelling. However, the word *Nirnu* is also a commonly attributed Pitjantjatjara name for the Bilby (Burbidge et al. 1988).

In the impromptu, highly emotionally charged event that transpired, I did not manage to directly exchange names with her, but learnt shortly after the gathering dispersed that this was Alice Cox. Alice is still alive in 2014, now around ninety years old, and is celebrated as the oldest and a special member of the Yalata Community and its history (Greg Franks, Yalata Community Inc., pers. comm., 1 June 1984). For this author, her presence, expertise, and raw, unabashed passion persist in their affective power transmitted across culture, language and the temporal span of thirty years.

The following morning, on the edge of the Yalata bluebush and myall lands to the south, another senior woman, MN, her husband JY and son LA were also consulted in a skins meeting.[8] On this occasion, MN 'broke into song' when handed the numbat. Wild numbats then survived only in an isolated remnant population in SW Western Australia. MN's response and knowledge in that instance, for that instance only, and in that place, effortlessly re-patched this little mammal into a fleeting time-space of animated presence.

8.7 After-affect Return: Doings, Undoings, Becomings

> Way before we enter into contracts that confirm that our relations are a result of our choice, we are already in the hands of the other—a thrilling and terrifying way to begin. We are from the start both done and undone by the other (Butler 2014a).

In returning to this now historical encounter in the present day re-telling, I attend, as Clough invokes of a Spinozan-Deleuzian angle of approach, to both the original affective impingement as well as its passage and duration of forces and intensities (Clough & Halley 2007). To re-ask: What did this encounter do? What has it become? What might it become?

Firstly, a return to these Maralinga encounter-exchanges sharply illuminated the absence of the individual voices and rich testimonies of senior Indigenous experts, such as the senior Anangu women named here, in accounts of species loss residing mainly in the scientific

[8] MN has now passed away, and on request from the Yalata community I refer to her only by her initials (Yalata Community Inc. pers. comm., 1 June 2014).

literature.[9] Equally, an aim was to acknowledge the underwritten and unvoiced affective dimensions of disappearances, and the profound provocation—the emotional, intellectual and animating dimensions—of the re-presentation of individual mammals even as inanimate, flattened museum forms in these encounters. Again, these encounter-exchanges might be understood as entangled intellectual and emotional triggers: a seeming flow of surprise, grief, excitement, and pleasure was intermeshed with and preceding recall of biology, habit, capture strategies, nicknames, jokes and anecdotal stories.

This account seeks to witness the profundity of knowledge exchanged—a homeland-based, first-hand, empirical accrual into local indigenous biocultural archives. My recent (2014) conversations with the Yalata Community again, when returning to write this account and seek guidance on publically naming senior people were encouraging: they expressed desire for these meetings to be shared and talked about, and for Indigenous knowledge about mammals to become more widely known. The Anangu consultants who have participated again, thirty years later in this account, are also creator-authors. A contemporary creative trajectory, an imperative, then is to broach the possibilities of expanded, co-written, multi-voiced compositions to also enter public narratives of the unfinished histories of mammal losses on this continent. I shall return to this notion to discuss one example, a generative template of recent co-writing suggested by the book *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*.

But, second, I want to flag the unfinished affective passage of the Maralinga encounter, as re-sparked in a context of creative affect inquiry. In my return to the encounter in the present day, not only had I not finished with the encounter, it became apparent that it had not finished with me. Apart from private and passing acknowledgement at the time with colleagues of how 'moving' these meetings were, I had not attempted to explore or articulate them in written form. The focus then, on the ground, was on mammal species and knowledge. 'Hard data'/ 'soft data' distinctions were tacitly inviolable. The 'hard data' of names, occurrence records, verifiable sightings, and physical specimens was the scientific target. The 'soft data' of the experiential, the ineffable and the unexpected affective 'by-products' of research lay outside 'the brief', and could not be accommodated in this epistemologically binary framework.

[9] This is not surprising given the research context, and although Burbidge et al. (1988) did briefly allude to this in a general sense, I contend that the profundity of these encounters is missed.

As introduced, I returned to thinking about these encounters through a lens of affect, and in the context of current research interest in an analysis of affective impingements—punctuated encounters—and the role of objects and image-objects as affective triggers. My focus is with the possibilities of new processual and compositional traces ('becomings') from affective encounters, objects and atmo-place-spheres.[10] This engages with the contemporary multidisciplinary bloom of humanities-based scholarship around the affective dimensions of experience and knowledge-making. But, I had not been fully conscious of the unfinished nature of the Maralinga meeting, in particular, until attempting to verbally recount it privately. I had relocated my original field journals, and drafted a written account. Yet, on several occasions, when I attempted to describe the passionate emotions, actions and speech of Elder Alice when I handed her a bilby, I was in turn unable to do so without being moved to tears. Each time, I was physically halted by emotion; a humbling arrest, an 'undoing', as philosopher Judith Butler (2014a) eloquently expresses, when one's gravity and forward motion is suddenly withdrawn: 'that something that takes hold of you and makes you stop and takes you down'. In turn, this 'undoing' became a generative provocation to begin to re-think and re-compose this shared encounter in terms of *after-affect*.[11]

Two elements are stressed. First, the recognition that this was a shared encounter; an encounter-exchange in more than one sense, although this was already recognised, acknowledged and enacted as a mammalogist participating in the original meeting. Second, that now I was encountering anew, in response to the earlier impingement, and that this might productively be named and explored as 'after-affect'. The first trajectory of inquiry taken—pushed and pulled along—was towards reflections on loss, grief and mourning.

Gender theorist turned philosopher of nonviolence, Judith Butler, offers new possibilities of encountering loss, grief and mourning. There is a 'transformative effect of loss … which cannot be charted or planned' in advance, Butler (2004, p21) observes; that:

[10] This takes impetus from thinking about vital relations to 'affective place', and seeking to question and expand notions of 'place belonging' to incorporate eco-ethical obligations of emplacement.

[11] Might this vocabulary of after-affect become a productive starting point for re-thinking and composition in other instances? To speculate that what an affective encounter does and undoes, its doings and *undoings*, is irreducibly coupled. The question 'What might an encounter become?' co-asks what is undone and unmade as compositional 'becomings' also.

> Mourning has to do with yielding to an unwanted transformation, where neither the full shape nor the import of that alteration can be known in advance. This transformative effect of losing always risks becoming a deformative effect. *Whatever it is, it cannot be willed. It is a kind of undoing.*
>
> If the life that is mine is not originally or finally separable from yours, then the 'we' who we are is not just a composite of you and me and all the others, but a set of relations of interdependency and passion—and these we cannot deny or destroy without refuting something fundamental about the social conditions of our very living. What follows is an ethical injunction to preserve those bonds, even the wretched ones, which means precisely guarding against those forms of destructiveness that take away our lives and those of other living beings and the ecological conditions of life.
>
> In other words, before ever losing, we are lost in the other, lost without the other, but we never knew it as well as we do when we do actually lose. This being in thrall is one way of describing the social relations that have the power to sustain and to break us. *Way before we enter into contracts that confirm that our relations are a result of our choice, we are already in the hands of the other—a thrilling and terrifying way to begin. We are from the start both done and undone by the other* (Butler 2014a; emphases added).

Butler's 'we' in entangled doing and undoing chimes with the ideas of co-poiesis and co-emergence elaborated by theorist of shared affect, visual artist, and psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger in her theory of matrixial trans-subjectivity (Ettinger 2004, 2006a, 2006b). This posits that we are, as human beings, as individual subjects, *a priori* trans-connected and co-emerging because each of us first grows with/in and co-emerges with/in an other—a m/Other. Indeed, we each first share space and time within the maternal 'womb', or matrixial space and time (Ettinger 2006a, 2006b). Thus, Ettinger makes the case that each of us is already *in relationship* before any assumption of an independent subjective identity—an '*I*'—is established. Indeed, the 'I' is already co-emerging, becoming, in

relation to the non-I, the (philosophical) Other.[12] This also suggests *a priori* shareability in difference (Ettinger 2006a). That, *a priori,* the first person is relational. That, implicitly, there is no 'I' without a 'non-I'.

Ettinger's word-concept of '*wit(h)nessing'* carries this I + non-I trans-connection into, and transforms, the notion of witness in the encounter-event (Ettinger 2006b, p220). To return to Anangu country, the Maralinga meeting was a shared impingement event, a shared affective exchange, even if I as one of the individuals in one of the cultural parties meeting around mammals only partially understood the full dimensions of the exchange that morning. Drawing on Ettinger's insights, 'witnessing' as a mammalogist then, and as re-presenter now, is more acutely apprehended and articulated as '*wit(h)nessing'*.[13]

So, to return to Butler thinking about loss and grief, 'we are already in the hands of the other'— whether we consciously avow or disavow this condition of human life—and we are, before any encounter that might be registered as affectively powerful, 'already done and undone' by the other. *And if we are not, we are missing something.* The affective impingement of an encounter, when we realise or affirm or deny ties, pulls and pushes, when we are transformed or deformed, made more capacious or rendered fallen when 'our gravity and forward motion is suddenly withdrawn', is after—*post facto*—our 'undoing' by an other.

Here, Butler is referring to other *people*, but she does take a tentative step towards others *as other living beings* (fellow species), and 'the ecological conditions of life' in this recent, prescient oration (Butler 2014a). And it is this bridge that is worth exploring, because not only does it chime with a western ecological epistemology and sensibility that acknowledges radical embeddedness in, and dependency on, planetary life systems, it also

[12] Ettinger's Matrixial theory emerged in her tripartite practice as a visual artist, clinical psychoanalyst and theorist. I suggest its concepts, insights and lexical makings richly inform thinking about the 'affective encounter' more widely; hence, I draw them in here, or they have drawn me to them, here, in after-affect's push and pull. 'Co-poiesis' (Ettinger 2004) and 'copoiesis' (Ettinger 2006b) are both used.

[13] The concept-word of wit(h)nessing has also informed my thinking in the trace of postcard_*affectus* laid out in Part A of the thesis.

speaks to an Indigenous philosophical ecology of culture and country.[14] As Deborah Bird Rose (2013) writes:

> Most of the Elders who have taught me … speak of *culture*, and they vigorously assert that culture is a specific way of being in the world (p100).

She lays out how the word 'country' has been remade:

> into a powerful *signifier of local, multispecies belonging*. In Indigenous country there is no nature/culture divide. One could say that country is all culture, but the more interesting point is that *it is all sentient, communicative, relational and inter-active… [C]ountry is an entangled matrix of multispecies situatedness* (2013, p100).

Crucially,

> a further consequence of situated knowledge amongst sentient beings is that knowledge is *relational*; and

> [i]t follows that nonhuman beings have, and live by, culture … They have their own foods, foraging methods, forms of sociality and seasonality; they have their own languages, and their own ceremonies (Rose 2013, p100).

So, each important mammal has its own culture, own song, own ceremony? Is this how to better understand what was actually happening that morning of mammal skin knowledge exchange? Bilby culture song and numbat culture song animated by these actual, yet nonliving, mammal members of country present in 'skin' forms? That Elder Alice was not (only) singing *ninu*'s song; *ninu* was singing (through) her, by way of her, she who had learnt *ninu*'s culture and was 'charged' to sing by and of and in *ninu*'s sudden presence? Did the taxonomic skin objects powerfully, yet fleetingly, bring bilby and numbat back into country, to living relations, and cultural obligations again? Alice Cox spoke fondly of this

[14] This phrase 'indigenous philosophical ecology' is used by Rose (2013, pp95–96), in the context of describing ecophilosopher Val Plumwood's intellectual interest in traditional Aboriginal 'philosophical animism' such that 'Aboriginal Australians always live within a world that is buzzing with multitudes of sentient beings, only a few of whom are human'.

time, hunting *ninu* in spinifex country, so was there also a return to happy childhood decades in northern homelands when this mammal was collaboratively hunted by women and girls?[15] When its place and role in country was enacted in homelands, not carried around in a travelling trunk of *walypala*[16] museum relics? Only she can answer these questions. It is this Elder's voice, her account, and her authority that is absent here.

What was striking in this shared exchange was Elder Alice's connectedness with these small, inert mammals, especially *ninu*, the bilby, enacted and expressed in touch, movement, action, voice, song, language. The role of touch was central to this exchange. Each animal was picked up and handed over, person to person, two hands to two hands, to be embraced against the body, held and rocked, sung to, visually examined, and its language name and culture (biology, habits) described, talked about, demonstrated in gestures. These were corpo-real[17], whole-bodied, spontaneous embraces. This was *not* claiming; this was *being claimed by*. Arguably, affective engagement was heightened by the presence of the physical animals themselves, rather than photographs of the mammals; by three-dimensional presence-form, rather than a two-dimensional visual representation as in a photograph.

What was striking as a mammalogist, as a participant-wit(h)ness I now suggest, was the obvious, profound connectedness that Alice Cox had with a suite of mammals, fellow species unknown to most of the non-Indigenous Australian population, and largely considered obscure, esoteric or superfluous curiosities unconnected to mainstream cultural concerns. So, this was also experienced as an authentic encounter-exchange of minds and passions, connected by the mammals, if from very different cultural angles of approach and informed by very different life histories.

This new passage of rethinking sparked by the arrest or 'undoing' of 'after-affect' has carried me to a new point of departure to speculate about an expanded notion of *culture,*

[15] The Greater Bilby has held important mythological and totemic status amongst many groups of traditional owners in desert homelands, with the white tail-tip traditionally valued and used for bodily decorative purposes (Johnson 2008).

[16] *Walypala* from 'whitefella': Pitjantjatjara language (Yalata, Oak Valley Communities & Mattingley 2009).

[17] After Ettinger (2006a, p68).

and the possibilities of *'the trans-cultural encounter'*.[18] A recomposing of the skins encounter-exchange as one in which both *human and nonhuman cultures* were participating—a relational assemblage of Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge and local homelands-based expertise, western scientific epistemology and experience *and* mammal cultures.

8.8 Affective Objects?

Before circling back to the trans-cultural in this crafting, what of the skins themselves? What was undeniable was the powerful triggering of visible and palpable emotion, followed by song and story engendered by these mammal forms. Remarkable and familiar also was the aura of respect, care and affection that attended each interaction by senior Anangu women and men with the mammal skins. So, should these taxonomic skins be called skin *objects*? Might they usefully be understood, in a more abstracted sense, as 'affective objects'? Intimate, tactile, trigger objects? [19]

I first approached a return to this affective encounter by reconsidering the notion of 'the somatic object' proposed by art theorist Jill Bennett in a context of contemporary aesthetics (Bennett 1997). In developing the idea, Bennett invoked the western medieval belief in the notion of 'real presence' in which it was held that objects could be invested with both supernatural and bodily presence and power and could act accordingly, independently, and at a distance on other living people. For example, in the 'miracle somatization' of bread in the Catholic ritual mass of transubstantiation, 'bread *becomes* Christ's body, and the communion wine his blood'; this 'host' in turn, 'could perform miracles … just as an icon could cry, talk to a devotee, heal the sick or end a drought' (Bennett 1997, p9).

Moreover, the origin of medieval imagery was in function and purpose, such that images did not merely represent saints and deities, they *literally* manifested presence and 'were expected to act, *to move and to be moved*; to exist in some kind of *affective* relationship with human subjects' (Bennett 1997, p9). So, for the medieval viewer/ user, 'images and

[18] I propose that 'trans' elicits a movement *across and between*, and is intended to carry that connotation here.

[19] The niggling problem of lexicon and the notion of *agency* (skin/ object/ 'nonhuman'/ fellow species, for example) shall be left to hum here for future approach. Of the latter, Whitehead (1967) and more recently Butler (2012), for example, have much to offer.

objects were related through functional homology, or through a shared or similar purpose' (1997, p9), and 'worked in *chains of association linking bodies, images and objects*' (1997, p10). The engaged and enacting body was crucial in this cultural construct because objects, 'things used, encountered, swallowed, worn, become imbued with bodily presence, precisely because of the ways in which they are activated or incorporated' (1997, p11).

My initial western scientific understanding that the mammal skins, at best, functionally exemplified or represented actual mammal species for the purposes of identification thoroughly underestimated the particular power of a still-recognisable and largely intact mammal. Although none had been given a life-like pose, because museum taxonomic skin preparations are typically made with the straight-leg, flattened-out appearance, all details of an animal's outer anatomy except the original eyes were intact and accessible to the human eye and hand. So, whilst these skins were most resolutely a form of western cultural object (a scientific museum artifact), it became evident that none were perceived in that framework by these senior Anangu experts. What might be speculated, I propose, is that the mammal skin forms were encountered as embodiments of intensely familiar and significant fellow country beings, now disappeared. Inanimate they may be, but there was no transformation into another material form[20], so these forms were not artifacts, not objects, and only superficially shared elements of affectivity described in the conceptual framework of somatic objects: arguably, an undeniable *manifestation of presence* in encounter. But I wonder what Alice Cox would say here.

To briefly extend this trajectory, political philosopher Jane Bennett (2010) presents another affect-informed trajectory that chimes with elements of the Indigenous understanding of country: her conception of assemblages of human and nonhuman beings, living and nonliving things in vital relationships as composing a new type of object. Such 'vital objects' uncouple the subject/object divide and the nature/culture binary, with a shift in focus to the relationality of worlds of matter-materiality and encounters that arise and decay. However, I would suggest, those crucial elements of living in country—cultural obligations and the imperative of reciprocity integral to the Aboriginal lived epistemology—are missing from Bennett's vital objects. I flag this link to Bennett's vibrant matter here in this chain of speculation because it continues to move and work in thought.

[20] Carved wooden animals, ornamentally marked with fire, are made by senior Maralinga Tjarutja women at Oak Valley. Perenti and wombats are popular subjects (Yalata, Oak Valley Communities & Mattingley 2009).

8.9 Numbing the Sensorium: Absences, Silences, Bleachings

> *Rather than presence, the trace began with absence. Tracing absence became a mode of enquiry. I became curious about the meanings of absence. A narrative of lacunae unfolded. Tenuous patterns of presence and absence were shaped into fragments of species histories.* (December 2012)

Other questions have been provoked by this after-affect passage. Might biological depauperation also be understood as aural and aesthetic loss? Have physical-visual disappearances across shared lands and homelands also manifested as aural lacunae, silent spaces once inhabited by mammal song and oral recount of knowledge? As a mammalogist standing in a red sand swale at the edge of the gated Maralinga Prohibited Area, I was privileged to hear, just once, the melodious southern Pitjantjatjara song of *ninu*, the Greater Bilby, spontaneously sung by a senior Anangu cultural custodian. Further south, in the myall woodland country of Yalata, the place to which people had been displaced from Ooldea and other connected spinifex homelands thirty years previously, I was equally astounded to hear and watch another senior woman burst into song; this time, in response to the Numbat. A new, unexpected vibrancy filled the air of these places on those two mornings. It filled the vacant and silent spaces experienced as working mammalogist looking for traces of species no longer present to living encounters. The songs, bodily embraces and emotional-intellectual responses by these elder women powerfully re-animated the silent, stilled animals present to them only in taxonomic skin forms. As a scientific interloper, the seemingly 'esoteric' pursuit of historical and contemporary biogeography was re-animated and given present moment voice as both living heritage and shared, intercultural, loss by these skin exchanges. But, have the permanent disappearances of many desert mammals also promoted a progressive silencing of the songs and rituals for them and their lyrical emplacement in living country, especially as senior Indigenous singers and traditional knowledge custodians have passed away? Only contemporary Maralinga Tjarutja Anangu voices, also directly absent in this paper, can answer this question.

Might we acknowledge a catastrophic loss of bio-aesthetic heritage has also accompanied distinctive marsupial species losses and the continuing homogenisation of faunas across the continent? That species depauperation is equally bio-aesthetic bleaching? Although not expressed in written scientific accounts, a deep appreciation of the physical beauty of these

ground-dwelling mammals, dismay at their rapid post-colonisation disappearances, and an acute regret that the opportunity to experience them alive, in place, in one's lifetime had largely passed, also hummed alongside the more prosaic objectives of ecological field research. I contend that it would now be generative to also speak of these species losses in degrees of silencing, stilling, de-animating, de-vitalising austral lands and atmospheres: a numbing of the shared-collective-austral sensorium. All are becomings of depauperation, experienced or perceived as a young mammalogist, but now amplified by a contemporary lens of affect and art practice.

8.10 Co-writing as wit(h)essing; Wit(h)nessing in co-writing

The new spark of after-affect has engendered questions about how to compose expanded accounts of species loss that include not only historical waves of extinctions but the gathering affective wave of new contemporary losses presaged by zoologists for northern Australia. Envisaged are intersectional accounts that draw on reservoirs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous biocultural knowledge, epistemological insights of the sciences and the humanities, *and* a notion of mammal cultures. Envisaged are forms of enunciation that draw in multiple participant voices and alternate empathies, rather than 'a singular, empathetic point of view: that of the victor', as Benjamin reminds us to vigilantly resist (Eng and Kazanjian 2002, p1). What compositions might be materialised where the notion of 'cultures' is enlarged to incorporate kin nonhuman beings?

In writing or rewriting accounts and histories of species loss, it would be generative to begin at the level of the encounter and render it a multi-vocal, shared encounter-exchange that crosses these cultural epistemologies and philosophies, and valorises the affective and ineffable dimensions of experience and knowledge-making. Accounts would carry a shift from witnessing to wit(h)nessing. They would reflect on silences, bio-aesthetic bleachings and de-vitalising of shared lands as part of an expanded language of bio/eco-logical depauperation.

An innovative template of co-/wit(h)ness writing is exemplified by the aforementioned 2009 book *Maralinga: The Anangu Story*, initiated and created by a working group of Oak Valley and Yalata women. This as a multi-voice, bi-lingual (Pitjantjatjara, English), narrative intended to work as an intergenerational cultural archive. The authors articulate this simply as: 'Maralinga – the Anangu Story is our story. We have told it for our children,

our grandchildren, and their children. We have told it for you'.[21] With the 'you', they speak directly to all participant-beholders, rendering it simultaneously an intercultural document that eloquently reopens the gate to any visitor to Anangu Maralinga country and the embodied stories gathered over lifetimes. The book carries and operates as a mosaic of first-person testimonies, textual descriptions and photographs of individual elder narrators, homelands and community, interlaced with crisp narratives of historical events pertaining to the Maralinga bomb test era. Text and photographs overlie page-spanning paintings composed by contemporary community members for the book; a vibrant mode of grounding the account in living country. The book engages as a visual and tactile object of interaction, wherein one can track different voices in first person accounts simply by following different text colours across pages as the bigger story moves in an intertemporal passage across decades. This is a complex, dense, rich document, beguilingly simple in appearance, and intentionally accessible to children as the inheritors and future of the Maralinga Anangu story. Yet, it is powerful beyond that primary aim; my repeat readings disclosed imbrications of detail and allusion known and not known about that country, the lingering injustice of the original displacements retold simply and powerfully, and the resilience of affective ties to country enacted in the determined reclaiming of country and place first in law, and again in the collaborative cultural record and aesthetic work of the book. I was also reminded of the latent gift of my own affective encounter at the gates of the former Maralinga prohibited area with generous women and men and a clutch of homeland mammal skins that elicited passionate story and song; an encounter that has come to reverberate in my contemporary practice in unpredictable after-affect.

8.11 Trans-cultural Encounter-Exchange 2014: An Affective Reintroduction

In this chapter I have travelled along this new compositional track to begin to speculate about the creative and critical potential of the 'trans-cultural' and the 'trans-cultural encounter' within affect. So, I want to end this passage by suggesting an example of a very recent trans-cultural meeting via the reintroduction of the Western Quoll, *Idnya*, (*Dasyurus geoffroii*) to Adnyamathanha emplaced homelands in the northern Flinders Ranges, South Australia. This took place in April 2014, and as the first unbounded release (into unfenced

[21] Back cover of the book. I have chosen not to reproduce an image of the book cover in isolation from its full complement of pages, but the front cover can be viewed online at: https://www.allenandunwin.com/browse/books/childrens/childrens-non-fiction/Maralinga-the-Anangu-Story-Yalata-Oak-Valley-Communities-with-Christobel-Mattingley-9781741756210

country with feral predator control) in Australia, is an informed experiment. In this trans-cultural encounter-exchange, participants were contemporary indigenous traditional owners with obligations to country, contemporary practitioners of western science also invested in an ethical imperative to creatively enact responses to mammal losses, *and* the quoll—human and nonhuman cultures in vital, relational assemblage at a local scale—drawing on the enlarging Aboriginal understanding of culture and country.

As I sat to write this expanded account in late April (2014), the first Western Quoll had just been 'welcomed back' to country by Adnyamathanha traditional owners and land carers in the Flinders Ranges. Forty individuals from southwest Western Australia are being translocated in a trial program of unbounded reintroduction into these lands from which they became locally extinct eighty to one hundred years ago (FAME 2014). This was reported as 'an emotional homecoming' (Staight 2014):

> Forty western quolls, fitted with radio tracking collars, are being brought to South Australia in two stages for the initial release.
>
> The females were the first to arrive in what was an emotional homecoming especially for the local Adnyamathanha people.
>
> 'My grandfather saw him. My dad didn't. But I'm proud to say that I've now seen him back on country,' said Vince Coulthard [Adnyamathanha Traditional Lands Association] in a blessing ceremony before the release.

The scene was in stark contrast to the one I described from thirty years ago. Zoologist Katherine Moseby was seated on the ground, holding up a female quoll. The *Idnya*, still partially in a cloth bag but with head and shoulders exposed, was held to directly face the community group, her welcoming hosts and future custodians. Chairperson Vince Coulthard was directly addressing her, this first female back into local homelands:

> 'This little girl here, she's been missing for a long time. Now we welcome her back …'.

Fittingly for an act of wit(h)ness in the second decade of the twenty-first century, standing beside Coulthard and focused on the quoll facing the welcoming community party, a young Adnyamathanha man was recording this blessing ceremony in digital video with an iPad (*Landline* 2014).

8.12 Still Moving (11 June 2014)

This passage of re-encounter and rethinking has been a reminder to seek to expand the 'realm of the possible' (after Butler 2014b)—those interlaced creative and critical possibilities—and to invoke the ethical injunctions or imperatives that attend or present from such an enquiry of after-affect. In unfinished movement, and in its processual mode of inquiry, this passage of affective return also notes and finds curious alliance with the energetic contemporary movement towards an expanded, interdisciplinary environmental humanities—for instance, as recently voiced by the international conference 'Deleuze's Cultural Encounters With the New Humanities' with the provocation:

> What would a humanities look like if our 'collective assemblages of enunciation' (Deleuze, A Thousand Plateaus) follows an 'affective term' that would embrace plants, rocks and animals? [22]

My account offers one way it might look. The affective encounter has been rethought as a trans-cultural event in which multiple human and nonhuman voices and forces intersect and participate in new creative becomings and understandings. It is a transversalising approach. Western ecological science, Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge, individual mammal cultures, and the doings and undoings of affective intensities co-compose, restore, and propel new movement in situated knowledge and creative action. Attending to unpredictable affect's potential is key.

[22] 'Deleuze's Cultural Encounters With the New Humanities', Department of English & Technoscience Culture Research and Development Centre, Hong Kong Shue Yan University and the Centre for the Humanities, Utrecht University; Hong Kong, 9–12 June, 2014. Deleuze's 'bio-geo-ethological philosophy' animates the question. On 'geo-philosophy', in particular, see Deleuze & Guattari (1994).

8.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced and explored the notion of *after-affect* precipitated by a return to a powerful encounter-exchange with senior Anangu women experts and animal 'skins' in the course of research on mammal species losses on the Australian Nullarbor. The lingering, provocative force of this exchange was reactivated during the larger creative trace of the postcard_*affectus* when I began thinking and writing about image-objects (Chapter Two) and objects as affective triggers (Chapter Three). It provoked a new scholarly reflection on the original science-based encounter and its becomings through a lens of affect, and an illumination of its potential as an episodic, unfinished and newly generative event in the present day. I have explored this affective provocation in terms of what it became, its doings, and undoings, drawing on philosophical reflections on grief by Judith Butler. It also seeded a connection with the concept of 'wit(h)nessing' from affect theorist and visual artist Bracha Ettinger, whereby the 'I' is always in relation with the 'non-I'. This makes resonant connection with the shared relationality of all encountering, and the creative potential of exploring doing, undoing and being 'undone', as Butler puts it, by the passage of forces and intensities of seminal encounters in artistic practice and scholarly research. This passage, and its seeding and articulation of *after-affect* in the intersectional space of thinking about an unfinished affective encounter, trigger animal-forms and unfinished mammal species losses on this continent, was another becoming of the pulse_pause spark of the Round Table postcard meeting.

CODA

Encounter and trace in an affective ecology of practice

In the long twilight of May, I dropped down onto a rock platform on the edge of the Cliffs of Moher, Clare, Ireland. From the aspect looking south, and checking the copy of the Round Table postcard I carried in one hand, I knew this was the wide stony shelf depicted, the one with the gesturing couple placed off to the right at its open edge, and the round table visible as a partial circle prominent in the foreground. A century later, in my a-bodied meeting, there was no table, nor any obvious signs of its presence in my angle of approach. I wanted to walk that rock ledge and search for some trace, anything, that might indicate where the structure had been: that a round table *had* once been there. It did not take me long. All I needed to do was orient my body to the relation between the table in the picture and the long attenuating line of the sculpted cliff face sharply profiled by the late light on the western horizon. And there, it was, a circle of rusted bones, a ground skeleton of the spikes and studs of the steel legs of the benched table still emplaced in the original drill holes in the hard grey shale. These last material traces were silently decaying to flakes and dust of rust in the Atlantic sea air. But the round table lingered on, in place, at my feet, an affective compass point pulled to as a beckoning image on a well-travelled postcard despatched just a few kilometres away for its austral destination, a hemisphere distant.

My twilight ground-truthing of the round table on the Irish cliffs was risky, unsanctioned, and thrilling to do. To this day, I have no way of knowing if Norrie Clair, the postcard's writer, received a bespoke card in return from her niece and sister in Queensland, nor what might have been expressed by them in response to her travelling communication of situated connection and question. But it was my own unforeseen encounter with the small, portable image-object produced from the aery cliff situation and its affective connections that sparked the practice-embedded research of this thesis. As I gather and conclude the project, I realise that the body of scholarship and compositions generated by my encounter with the Round Table postcard also makes an intertemporal reply to the postcard author *in absentia*. She could never have predicted the tangential outcome of her handiwork in a body of processual research catalysed and energised by fleeting, lingering and recursive affective forces and intensities.

Passage precedes position, Massumi (2002) reminds us. In this research, I proposed and set out to explore and translate the affective encounter and its provocations as a passage of movement, composition and potential *in*, and *as*, practice. I framed it as a creative-critical modality, a pathway to be travelled in making, thinking and doing. Now articulated and laid out in the thesis, this is an *affective trace*: a tracery of the multifaceted provocation of encounter and its generative passage of forces, energies and capacities in a creative lexicon of doings, undoings and becomings.

The echoes of Deleuze's Spinozist question, 'what can a body do?' recast as 'what does an object do; undo?' and 'what might affective movement become?' co-travel through the research. Caught by the power and nature of the experience, I stressed *a-bodied* encountering, explicitly keeping the bloom net of the provocation as one of embodied mind/ minded body in the becomings of practice.

The postcard is an image-object: a material haptic-visual form of engagement. It promotes *synsensorial* encountering in which both the visual and haptic senses contribute to the intensity of the affective impingement. But the postcard meeting was not just the province of hands and eyes; it was whole-of-body in activation. My articulation of synsensorial encountering stresses the perceived *synthetic and synergistic* workings of affective provocation entangled with multi-sensorial experience: haptic, visual, aural, olfactory, kinaesthetic and proprioceptive senses in play, at *syn-work*, in an affective encounter.

The trace of the postcard encounter took impetus from an idiolocal 'somewhere' and the experiences of attunement to a situated-*yet*-unmappable, actual-virtual sphere of emplacement.[1] I moved from and with ideas and namings of Affective Place to Belonged-by Place, to Becoming Shard Country, to Shard Country, to Belonged-by Place and its connected Shadow Places of material and ecological support. These actual-virtual (geo-corpo-virtual) spheres intersect with the melodious Currumbilbarra country of the Wulgurukaba naming and the Thul Garrie Waja overlapping country of Bindal naming, each of which predates and coexists with the colonial-contemporary environs of Townsville. All name the pause place of the Round Table postcard, and the outer holding place of the Archive at #75, my first site of investigation and translated response.

[1] 'Unmappable' as in cartographic representation. Rather than map, how to 'world' in other vocabularies of art practice remains my motivation here.

Embracing the multi-sensate, immersive experience of encounters was not enough to articulate an apprehension best described as a synergy of the senses in my attuned-to place, the *affective synsensorium* of Currumbilbarra country. The affective synsensorium is the intersectional space of encountering in which multiple senses are at work in synthetic and synergistic ways such that a powerful, heightened affectivity is experienced. The affective synsensorium is a fecund matrix—a charged field conditioned by differential, idiosyncratic, a-bodied attunement. Tapping into this, riding the pulse flows of *conatus*, generated new capacities in practice manifested for instance in capacious river bowls, sounded bellings, and intersectional writing that organically took impetus and shape from the studio processes of making, and all these compositions pushed towards a synergy of creative expression.

I was shown anew this sensorium; the affective place becoming a belonged-by place, not by re-staking another claim to old stolen magnetic country but by being claimed to review what idiolocal emplacement also teaches: that old homing grounds and roaming spaces are always accompanied by their contemporary material and ecological *shadow places*. To enter the shadows is an injunction of affective emplacement: it is an acknowledgement of being *belonged by*, and, in turn, asks of an artist-researcher what that might do, undo, and become. In tracking and naming the shadow places, the affective trace became *an eco-affective trace* in my lexicon of practice.

The *shadows trace* casts a new transversalising move by connecting ecological, affective and material dimensions of emplacement in a concrete way. The shadow toponymy, a novel outcome of this trajectory, names and opens out a new rich bloom space of investigation: a shadow 'country' of previously invisible, silent, unrecognised places of material and ecological support in a much larger ecology of co-entangled somewheres. The shadow toponymy, in poetic use as a pulse of shadow place names in its first iteration in exhibitions, concretely entangles an idiolocale in a globally-dispersed web of other idiolocales of beings and systems. A 'somewhere' of a-bodied practice is also connected to the borderless 'everywhere' of the closed chamber of planetary atmosphere. In attending to ecological discontents of emplacement, the shadows trace reveals how critical and poetic, affective and ecological intersections co-compose in practice; this is an exciting waymaker for continuing and future work.

The affective trace is a richly generative modality of affect-engaged practice. At the outset of this research, I expressed my interest in expanding, enriching and engendering new

vocabularies of response, investigation and imagination where energies of idiolocal emplacement, objects and encounters meet and synergise anew. But, what I intuited from the force of the postcard encounter, before I had even begun to think in any depth about pathways of affect or lines of trace, was an intuited field of potential—unknown and unknowable in advance—and which I was eager to engage with in practice. To re-world the encounter and its passage through an idiosyncratic vocabulary of material and immaterial becomings is the work of processual, affect-engaged art praxis. From the studio, it was this work and potential: *the image-object, lightenings, soundings, v-pulses, photoshards and photo-ostraca, clay river bowls, the shadow toponymy, and ensemblages scored with iterations of the refrain of pulse_pause.*

My intentional studio approach to experiment and empirically travel with materials and ideas is carried in many of the art works I have described in the chapters of this thesis. The processual moves, and moves through, like affect. The processual also welcomes the unforeseen. For instance, what I first envisioned in my mind's eye when beginning to work with the photographic archive, building on nascent studio explorations, was resolved over a lengthy studio passage of trial and error as novel illuminated photographic porcelain works, the *lightenings*. But, unforeseen, this pathway also seeded the idea of the portable solar power unit and a collaborative repository of new knowledge created by devising, assembling and deploying the solar trunk in exhibition settings. Also unanticipated at the outset was the addition of sound to the vocabulary of my practice, both as a collected haecceity of affect, and as a co-player with objects in inter-media ensemblages. My practice has been vitally expanded by embracing sound as an idiolocal haecceity, sound as affective *ephemeros* that compelled wit(h)ness as collected recordings, sound re-composed into passages as a listening portal to an affective place, and soundings created by new sonorous ceramic forms of emplacement as another translation of a-bodied attunement. Likewise, a new-found synergy of expression in the *shard* (ceramic, photographic and pixelated, of country, of what is being lost) is part of an expanded material-discursive vocabulary that emerged first in the studio processes and fed back into the trace over its passage. But, affect's unpredictable *syn-work* also pushed my practice towards new, big and resolutely whole-bodied objects of affect in the clay river bowls which as humming touchstones carry and call back to the melodious and ecologically-sharding country of and from which they were materially and affectively composed. The trans-forming pathway from a small palm-sized postcard to a capacious, thigh-high bell bowl is affect's work of enhancement and movement in and of practice.

I entered this project as an artist-researcher invested in materiality, empirical process, and embodied experiences translated into tangible objects and gallery-based re/encounters. But I also began the trace wanting to explore 'a nexus of the material and immaterial' in making and thinking as part of feeling my way forward in praxis, ruminating on how interplays of the *ephemeros* and indeterminacy of light with long-lived vitreous ceramic materiality, along with the nebulous phenomenology of atmospheres, have stimulated not only studio productions but the question of language in practice: *how* to articulate in words these explorations in ways that matter in meaning without foreclosing the potential of this vital creative space that energises my work as an artist-researcher. Working with insights from quantum field theory, Karen Barad (2007, 2012) convincingly unsettles and troubles the words material and immaterial, provoking us by proposing that imagining and thinking *are* material practices if mattered or made manifest and active in meaning by the '(im)material' body—of an artist-researcher, for instance. At the microphysical scale of the atom and the subatomic electron, the radical indeterminacy of matter, and even touch, is revealed. The fleshy, cellular, electron-rich, technologically extended and situated artist-maker's body is also a domain of indeterminate ontology, an oscillation of material-immaterial mattering, of transmateriality, as Barad argues. So what do I mean now by the descriptor 'immaterial' when referring to transient forces and energies of affective encounters in attuned-to places and atmospheres? Where have I arrived on the pathway of my trace? I think these forces are now also usefully articulated and wondered about in terms of the (im)material: immaterial because they of the 'sensed' and 'felt' that is ungraspable and unfixed, in both haptic and cognitive veins, and material because they are of the gut, brain, muscles, concepts, imaginings, hunches and memories of the flesh-bound, electric artist-maker's body. These affective forces and intensities might also be described as corpo-virtual, which encapsulates an understanding of them as a-bodied and virtual-transient. I am still touched and affectively moved by the encountering: this is the corpo-real, as Ettinger (2006) reminds us. And, fleeting electric flashes of encountering that surprise and linger in their impingement are corpo-real *and* generative gifts in the intertwined feeling-forward, making, thinking, imagining, doing and undoing of processual art practice.

To re-world the encounter and its passage of energies, intensities and bodily capacities is the work and potential of affect-engaged praxis. It is the making manifest, making material, and making meanings of the provocation and its push. It is a worlding in artworks, investigations, collaborations, and new speculations and foreshadowings that continue to

ask: What if? ‘What if?’ is a powerful question that co-travels with affect in the syn-work of practice-based research.

The modality of the affective trace, the eco-affective trace of shadows, and the vocabulary of work I have developed with them, expand an understanding of what situated contemporary art research that engages with affect in practice might be, and can do. The Round Table postcard encounter, the *occursus* of enhancement and challenge, refused to be ignored, but my research passage might have taken other compositional and scholarly directions as it unfolded. This is the vital potential of the affective trace—the provocation ignites a proliferation of connections, questions, and promise that generate, infuse and enthuse practice, but the most insistent shape its passage in any span of inquiry. Affect’s syn-working is unpredictable, and patient, I have learnt: it also returns in after-affect across times, spaces and disciplines to do and undo.

I conclude intrigued and energised by the poetics and potential of the refrain of *pulse_pause* elicited by the research passage. It is a rhythm of encountering and trace that inspires a creative modality: a meta-melody of stillness and flow in an affective ecology of practice.

So begin with the electric moment; begin with the (im)material object; begin in movement. One will likely be enough. Ride a-bodied energies of pulse and pause. Begin in the hyper-local. Trace material and ecological shadows to find and name nets of interconnected flow and dependencies of a ‘somewhere’ of encounter that is ‘everywhere’ via the breath of a conative body. Re-make, re-think, re-world energies and ontologies of encounter.

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Appendix A

Thesis Portfolio (Digital): List of Compositions

This appendix itemises the portfolio of support works presented in digital thesis portfolio. The compositions are slideshow passages (Powerpoint .ppsx files), soundings (.mp3 files), and digital videos (v-pulses; QuickTime .mov files). These works pertain to Chapters Four, Five and Six. A list of exhibitions referred to in the thesis chapters is provided at the end of the appendix.

CHAPTER FOUR: To the Archive

Slideshow passages

To_the_Archive_Passage_2011–2014.ppsx

ArchivePlace(Twilight)_2012. ppsx

Soundings

Soundings used in exhibition ensemblages are included in the digital thesis portfolio as .mp3 files (128 kbps). These are more portable versions of the larger gallery broadcast files (320 kbps .mp3, and .wav).

	duration (hr:min:sec)| *file* size
 1. *The Commons (Twilight)*, 2011 [TheCommons(Twilight).mp3]	55:00 | 52.8 MB
 2. *The Commons (Twilight extract*), 2011 [TheCommons(Twilight_extract).mp3]	23:47 | 22.8 MB
 3. *Green Archive*, 2011 [GreenArchive_loop.mp3]	05:45 | 5.5 MB

4. *Rainbird & Wind*, 2011 [Rainbird&Wind.mp3] — 06:32 | 6.3 MB

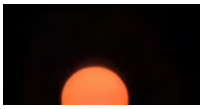
5. *Southeasterly in*, 2012 [Southeasterly_in.mp3] — 03:14 | 3.1 MB

6. *Ita's approach (extract)*, 2014 [Ita's_approach.mp3] — 08:23 | 8.23 MB

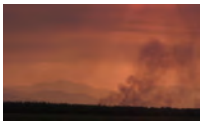
7. *Archive Place Passage*, 2011–14 [ArchivePlace_Passage.mp3] — 1:22:47 | 79.5 MB

V-pulses

QuickTime movies (.mov) used as digital projections.



1. *Pulse 1*, 2011 [Pulse_1.mov] — 03:24 mins, 1280x720 / 214.5 MB



2. *Legacy of the Commons*, 2011 [Legacy_of_the_Commons.mov] — 25:38 mins, 1920x1080 HD/ 1.64 GB

3. *Green Archive Place*, 2012 [GreenArchivePlace.mov] — 14:55 mins, 1920x1080 HD / 1.46 GB

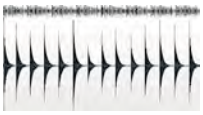
4. *Silver Archive Place (Rainbird)*, 2012 [SilverArchivePlace_Rainbird.mov] — 20:20 mins, 1920x1080 HD/ 2.04 GB

5. *Silver Archive Place (Commons)*, 2012 [SilverArchivePlace_Commons.mov] — 20:18 mins, 1920x1080 HD/ 2.04 GB

6. *Crepuscule 1*, 2011 [Crepuscule1.mov] — 02:59 mins, 1920x1080 HD/ 286.6 MB

CHAPTER FIVE: In the Riverbowl … And its Leavings

In_the_Riverbowl_2013.ppsx



Riverbelling.mp3 (66:00 mins; 63.4 MB) [sounding]

Becoming_ShardCountry.ppsx

CHAPTER SIX: Seeking the Shadow Places

A_ShadowPlace_Toponymy.ppsx

A_Passage_of_Port_Leavings_2011–2014.ppsx.

EXHIBITIONS

Listed below are exhibitions staged and participated in as part of the research project. The exhibitions are referred to in the chapters of the thesis.

2012 *Archive Place (Twilight)*, 2012. Hope Gallery (Postgraduate Project Space), University of Wollongong, 3–14 September, 2012. Solo research exhibition.

2013 *EcoArts*, 2013 First EcoArts Australis Conference, Innovation Centre, University of Wollongong, Australia, 12–13 May, 2013. Cross-media ensemblage: *Pulse_Pause 2013*. Conference exhibition.

2014 *Cicada Waterfall*, 2012–2014. Collaborative porcelain series with Elisabeth Cummings exhibited in *Elisabeth Cummings: A Still Life*, King Street Gallery on William, Sydney, Australia, 8 July 8–20 August, 2014. Two-person collaboration.

2015 *Turn, Turn, Turn: The Ceramics Studio Tradition at the National Art School*. National Art School Gallery, Sydney, Australia, 5 June–8 August, 2015. Curated survey exhibition; New South Wales public gallery; invited artist.

Appendix B

Dating the Round Table Postcard

The historical picture postcard, ‘the Round Table postcard’, was undated. It carried no postage markings or stamp, and had likely been included as part of a group dispatch from its place of origin by its writer Haniora (Norrie) Clair or her daughter Kate Clair, Liscannor, Clare, Ireland.

In order to more precisely date the postcard, searches were made for similar ‘Cliffs of Moher’ postcards and photographs in the digitised, online collections of Irish and British libraries and museums. Research typed it as a colour-tinted collotype, a mass-produced, popular format developed by Valentine & Sons of Scotland (University of St Andrews 2012). Initial focus was given to the Valentine & Sons series of pictorial postcards in these institutional collections of Ephemera, but this was widened to also include photographic collections from diverse sources, and extended to searching online vintage postcard collector websites.

In summary, the recorded date range for comparable postcards and photographs in these collections spanned the period 1890–1920. No exact match for this Valentine postcard was located, and in the end, no precise year can be attributed. However, close examination of available records suggests that a date range of 1900–1910 is most likely. A feasible date of no later than 1910 is strongly indicated.

This institutional collection and visual research trace is collated below.

Figure B.1

The Round Table postcard: recto

Figure B.2

Figure B.2

‘Cliffs of Moher. Co. Clare’. Postcard. Valentine, Dublin. Colourtone Series. Year: Unknown.

This is the exact Valentine series postcard *image* as the Round Table postcard in question. The postcard serial number, bottom right, is identical to the Townsville card: 39734 JV (in circle). The postcard size is 14 x 9 cm.

Although the image is identical, the top caption lettering and content is different, and this is a different print edition to the Liscannor-Townsville postcard—it carries a title, top right, without the description of the Cliffs. The verso of the card is not shown or described in the collection record.

Although this is the closest match to the postcard, the year of publication or issue is ‘Unknown’. Note the condition of the Round Table: damaged and incomplete.

Source: Clare County Library Postcard Collection. Local Studies Centre, Clare Collection
Item: PC_CL267759 Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare; File: 00004945.jpg
Collection Webpage:
http://foto.clarelibrary.ie/fotoweb/Grid.fwx?archiveId=5013&position=1&search;
Accessed 01 December 2011/ 10 January 2014

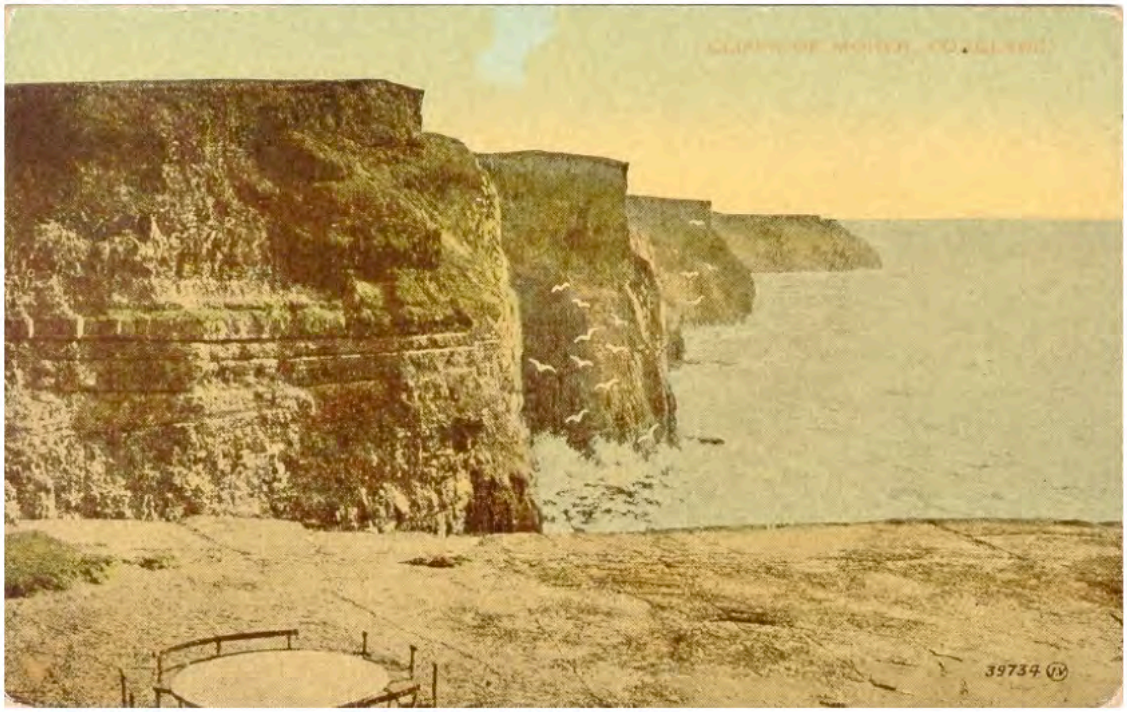


Figure B.3

Figure B.3

‘Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare’. Postcard, colour, glossy (13.9 x 8.8 cm). Valentine & Sons Ltd.

The photo-based background image is identical to the Townsville postcard, but the standing viewing couple is absent. The Round Table is in the exact same state of damage. The series number (39734 JV) is identical to both the Townsville postcard and Figure B.2.

This version is accompanied by the Museum repository date 1910–1920.

Were the woman and man removed from the image to produce this postcard? Or were they added to this background, to compose the Round Table postcard image? Was it created by double exposure? Research has also revealed that artists were employed by the printing company Valentine & Sons to touch up negatives (University of St Andrews 2012). I suggest from closer examination of the digitised image at high resolution, with the facility to zoom in on details, that the standing couple might be artist hand-painted additions to the original photographic ‘topographic view’. This could be used to create a new collotype print series.

The verso indicates that this is a Valentine’s ‘Carbo Colour’ Postcard, from Valentine & Sons Ltd., Scotland and London, and that it was printed in Scotland (Limerick City Museum item notes).

Source: Limerick City Museum, Ireland
Item Identifier: 1990.0145
Collection webpage: http://museum.limerick.ie/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/10339; accessed 1 December 2011

Figure B.4

Figure B.4

‘Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare’. Black and white photograph; 21 x 15 cm. Robert French (photographer). Lawrence Collection (1880–1914).

This is a photographic print, not a postcard. The date range 1880–1914 pertains to the whole Lawrence Collection of photographs. The photographer Robert French was active in making photographs for the Lawrence Studio, Dublin across these 34 years. The useful upper date here is 1914.

Of interest is the intact, undamaged condition of the Round Table. This image clearly predates the original photograph of this location depicted in the Round Table Valentine original, and the postcard versions shown in Figures B.2 and B.3.

Collection Source: National Library of Ireland, Lawrence Collection of Photographs via Clare County Library
Image Name: WL_CL692509 Cliffs of Moher
File: 00012194.jpg
Clare county Library Fotoweb page:
http://foto.clarelibrary.ie/fotoweb/Grid.fwx?archiveId=5005&position=1&search=
Accessed: 01 December 2011/ 10 January 2014

Figure B.5

Figure B.5

‘Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare’. Black and white postcard. Lawrence, Dublin, circa 1910.

This is a Lawrence (Dublin) postcard rendered from the black and white photograph in Figure B.4. It carries the Lawrence studio number 630. Date of attribution attached is 1910.

Usefully, given that this postcard rendition is circa 1910, this dates the original photograph (Robert French, Lawrence Collection) as pre-1910. This slightly narrows the date range to 1880 to circa 1910.

It can be concluded that prior to 1910, the Round Table was intact and undamaged, although no more precision in date can be given to this image.

Collection Source: Clare County Library (Ireland), Postcard Collection
Item: PC_CL297512 Cliffs of Moher
Studio Catalogue Number: 630
Collection webpage:
http://foto.clarelibrary.ie/fotoweb/Grid.fwx?archiveId=5013&position=1&search;
Accessed 01 December 2011/ 10 January 2014

Figure B.6

Figure B.6

‘Cliffs at Moher. County Claire. (i.e. Clare), Ireland. Photochrom colour print. Dated between ca. 1890 and ca. 1900. Detroit Publishing Co., 1905.

Photomechanical colour photochrom print. Forms part of the ‘Views of Ireland’ photochrom print series by the Detroit Publishing Co. Collection notes record the date created/published as between ca. 1890 and ca. 1900. The title of the print (print number ‘12111’), is from the publishing company and is dated ‘1905’.

This image is the Lawrence Collection image shown in Figures B.4 (original photograph) and B.5 (postcard). Usefully, the date range of the original Lawrence Collection photograph is narrowed to the decade 1890–1900. This renders it a late Victorian record of the Round Table site. Note the intact, undamaged condition of the table and benches. This clearly predates the later Valentine postcard series, including the Townsville postcard, in which the Round Table is evidently damaged. This evidences that the Cliffs and Round Table image used in the Valentines postcards is certainly later than 1890, and feasibly later than 1900.

Source Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA
Prints and Photographs Online Catalogue (PPOC)
Photocom Print Collection
Call Number: LOT 13406, no. 020 [item] [P&P]
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print
Source (Image): http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsc.09847/
Digital ID: digital file from original - ppmsc 09847 http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsc.09847
Source (Item information): http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002717369/
Accessed: 20 December 2013; 20 August 2014
(Rights advisory: No known restrictions on publication).

Figure B.7

Figure B.7

‘Cliff of Moher, Lahinch, Co. Clare’. Black and white photographic postcard. Valentine, Dublin. Date unknown.

The repository description is ‘View of Cliffs of Moher looking South West with three people and round table in foreground’ (see source below). This is a black and white photographic postcard (not a photo-based collotype) created by Valentine & Sons Ltd., (Dublin).

Compared with the original Round Table postcard image, and its replicas in Figures B.2 and B.3, the table site is in a more advanced state of damage and disintegration. No benches have intact backrests remaining. Several show just fragments of horizontal backrest supports still attached to the vertical uprights. It is clearly a wet day (the table top); not one for sitting down or lingering with a picnic.

Valentine & Sons returned to publishing real photographic postcards circa 1910, but the image may have been taken earlier or later than this. See Figure B.8 which suggests a date ca. 1910, or even earlier.

Source Collection: Clare County Library, Postcard Collection
Item Identifier: PC_CL237472 (00001244.jpg)
Source webpage: www. foto.clarelibrary.ie/fotoweb

Figure B.8

Figure B.8

‘Cliffs of Moher. Four people seated at round table on the Cliffs of Moher’.
Black and white photograph, 12.3 x 9.8cm. George Unthank Macnamara (photographer). Circa 1910.

This is a reliably sourced and dated print from the Irish photographer George Unthank Macnamara, and part of the larger Macnamara Collection of Clare photographs. As such it has been reliably dated as ca. 1910.

This gives a clear gauge of the condition of the Round Table (with benches) ca. 1910. It is very similar to that visible in Figure B.7. Metal bench uprights have some fragments of backrest horizontals remaining. The photographic postcard image of Figure B.7 may also be ca. 1910, or earlier.

Repository: Clare County Library, Macnamara Collection
Image Name: Cliffs of Moher MN_CL692536
Clare County Library, Fotoweb: 00000627.jpg
Source: http://foto.clarelibrary.ie/fotoweb/Grid.fwx?archiveId=5010&position=1&search=
Accessed 10 January 2014

Figure B.9

Figure B.9

‘Cliffs of Moher. The Cliffs of Moher showing the round table’. Black and white photograph 8 x 5 cm. Photographer unknown. Date unknown.

The Round Table appears to be badly damaged and somewhat more weathered than in Figure B.8. The metal bench supports appear more skeletal. The rock platform also appears to have been badly eroded and pockmarked by water/storm wave damage. There is water lying in pools under the table. The damage to the rock platform is pronounced, when one compares it with previous photographic images. Unfortunately, the photograph is undated. But it appears to postdate Figure B.8: post 1910.

Using the condition of the Round Table as a measure, the original Valentine & Sons postcard image (Figure B.1) is clearly earlier than this photograph, and later than the Lawrence studio photograph (1890–1900). It is feasibly located somewhere in the date range 1900–1910, and perhaps closer to the middle rather than the later years of this first decade of the twentieth century.

Source Collection: Clare County Library (Ireland), Miscellaneous Photographs Collection.
Item: MP_0026 Cliffs of Moher
File: 00009678.jpg
Webpage: http://foto.clarelibrary.ie/fotoweb/Preview

Appendix C

Ellen Carroll's Angle of Arrival 1875

> The Naval Brigade, immigrant ship, arrived from Queenstown [Cork] yesterday. During the voyage, there were two deaths and one birth. The immigrants are very healthy, and evidently of a most desirable class. The weather is fine and settled.
>
> By the last escort from Charters Towers, the Queensland National Bank received 4181 ounces of gold (The Brisbane Courier 1875).

Ellen O'Farrell arrived in Cleveland Bay, Townsville aboard the immigrant barque 'The Naval Brigade' on June 6, 1875. It had sailed from Queenstown, Cork, Ireland, almost four months earlier on February 12, tracking via Cape Town, South Africa, across the Indian Ocean and along the southern and eastern coasts of Australia to northern Queensland. The passage lasted 113 days. Two deaths and one birth were recorded en route. On board were 196 souls, mostly young, unmarried female and male Irish emigrants. Of the 190 adults, 175 were 'free' passengers bound for service in the new colonial settlements of North Queensland. Occupations listed were domestic servants (59), farm labourers (64), a baker and a tailor (Queensland State Archives 2013a; The Queenslander 1875a).

Of the 69 single women on board, accompanied by 63 single men, were Ellen Carroll, 20 years old, and Maria (Mary) Carroll, her eighteen year old sister from the village of Liscannor, County Clare (Queensland State Archives 2013b). These sisters were temporary, economic migrants from the coastal village of Liscannor in rural Clare, western Ireland. Family lore suggests Ellen, encouraged by tales of 'gold in the streets', had planned to go to the new Australian gold rush country of northern Queensland for a period of two years to work, earn good income, and then return home to Ireland.

Ellen Carroll, family lore recounts, would not have been able to travel across hemispheres solo, so her younger sister Maria Carroll was persuaded, reluctantly, to accompany her. Maria had no desire to leave Liscannor and family, but it would only be for two years she was reassured (M. E. Boscacci pers. comm., 2011–2013; numerous occasions). The narrative, as carried into the present day, is that the four-month sea voyage and southern crossing via South Africa, was a terrifying experience, and Ellen vowed, should she make

landfall safely, never to set foot on a ship again. She never did, not even on to the local ferry that crosses Cleveland Bay from Townsville to nearby Magnetic Island. The nascent township of Townsville, her port of arrival and landing place, became her pause place. Maria, her younger sister, also was 'stranded' in the northern Australian tropics.

In the early June fine and settled weather, the arrival of the first immigrant ship into Cleveland Bay in two years was a highly anticipated event (The Brisbane Courier 1875). A 'crowd of "pleasure-seeking boats" and two coastal steamers went out' to meet the barque in the Bay, anchored 12 to 14 miles offshore. But becalmed half way, the eventual landing was delayed until the following morning. 'A large crowd on the wharf received the new-comers with a rousing cheer, which was heartily responded to from the crowded deck of the steamer'. A newspaper report remarked the 'immigrants are all from Ireland, and are a fine sample of the sons and daughters of Erin' (The Queenslander 1875a). Another reported that 'the immigrants are very healthy, and evidently of a most desirable class'. And, pointedly alluding to the gold boom wealth of the region, '(m)arried householders … had come to take a look at the single girls with a view to the household comfort of their respective wives' (The Queenslander 1875b).

Ellen and Maria were listed on the Naval Brigade's ship manifest as 'free' passengers. In the absence of historical documentation, it is reasonable to deduce that the sisters were part of the Colony of Queensland's Assisted Emigration Scheme (1859–1884) in which young single Irish women, in particular, were sought to work as domestic servants in the frontier colonial townships (Queensland State Archives 2013a). To this end, '[t]hroughout the [British] colonial period, single women emigrating as domestic servants were provided with free passage' (Watson 2012, p39). Shortly after arrival, as recounted in family lore, Ellen entered private domestic service in Townsville, but no more details are known (M. E. Boscacci, pers. comm., April 2011).

Ellen's and Maria's younger sister Haniora 'Norrie' Carroll (m. Clair) had remained in Liscannor, Clare. Never to see her sisters again, correspondence by 'ship mails' became the sole means of communication.[1] The Round Table postcard eventually followed Ellen into that same port place on its own seaborne postal passage across the equator to northern

[1] By 1869, mail steamer ships travelled to Australia from the British Isles via the Suez Canal. Air mail into Townsville from Brisbane commenced in 1930 (P & O Heritage 2013; The Sydney Morning Herald 1930).

Queensland.

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Appendix D

The Archive in Contemporary Art: a literature review

Keywords: the archive, contemporary art, forgetting, counter-archives, material trace, sound archive, ephemerality, future archives

Abstract

The will to archive continues to be a powerful impulse in contemporary culture (Featherstone 2006). This literature review critically reviews and reflects on literature on the topic of the archive and the engagement of contemporary artists with ideas about archives and archive-making. A refrain heard in the course of this review was a contemporary preoccupation with memory, particularly with the advent of a possible new age of forgetting as global digital connectivity promotes an unprecedented externalisation of personal and social memory into the virtual memory spaces of the Internet. Selective artistic responses entering and exploring this site of ephemeral potential and emergent creativity are introduced. The potential of bespoke long-lived material archives as new contemporary projects of embodied witness—idiosyncratic future archives made by artists—resonates in the midst of the vast collective project of digital ephemerality.

An Impulse to Archive

One of the defining characteristics of the modern era has been the increasing significance given to archives as the means by which historical knowledge and forms of remembrance are accumulated, stored and retrieved (Merewether 2006). The will to archive continues to be a powerful impulse in contemporary culture (Featherstone 2006). This literature review summarises and critically reviews literature on the topic of the Archive and the engagement of contemporary artists with ideas about archives and archive-making. Particular focus is given to art practices from the past decade. These encompass two-dimensional and three-dimensional disciplines and genres, principally photography, mixed media installation, assemblage, objects and sound works. Artists-as-archivists is one subtopic that will be given priority in the broader topic review. This sources definitions and concepts from disciplines where salient literature pertains, including cultural history, art theory and philosophy, art criticism and review, and the practices/ texts of contemporary artists. Whilst most literature relates to British, American and European artists, several Australian artists who use or engage with the archives in different ways are also considered here.

The review was engendered by a creative-critical investigation of an intergenerational, familial collection of photographs and pictorial postcards accrued and kept safe for more than a century. In entering this affective cache, however, I had yet to critically reflect on the possible meanings, histories of thought or treatment of the subject of the archive in the broader field of the contemporary visual arts. To this extent, I suggest the choice of

literature to review was influenced by my unfolding inquiry, as well as an expanded answer to the 'call of the archival' at a juncture in practice-led research and composition.

Derrida's Fever

A useful place to start in the labyrinth of literature on the archives is philosopher and theorist Derrida's (1998) account 'Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression' which began with an excavation of the origin and earliest meanings of the word 'archive'. The word is derived from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, who ruled the Greek city states. Derrida observed that the concept of the archive shelters in itself the memory of the name *arkhé* (1998, p2) and derived two meanings relevant to the latter: the 'commencement' and the 'commandment' (1998, p1). Derrida (1998) went further though, to propose that the word archive also 'shelters' itself from this memory that it shelters, in that it also forgets it. Thus, the archons who housed the documents and legal records of the city state's operations, were the first of all the documents' guardians, and had the power to interpret the archives. Modern cultural historians define the archive as a place in which public records are kept (Steedman 2002; Velody 1998). English cultural historian Steedman (2002) contends that the archive, in a proper and expanded definition, includes the system of recording (listing), storage and retrieval, and that modern English and French archives instituted since the late eighteenth century had the right of public access simultaneously ascribed to them. Traditionally, as Spieker (2008) summarised, the archives served a legal function, and over time changed from legal depositories to institutions of historical research; the storehouse for material from which national memories were constructed (Featherstone 2006). By the end of the nineteenth century, the archive had morphed into a hybrid institution based in public administration and historical research alike: the Janus head of the archives (Spieker 2008).

Derrida's meditation on the roots and the idea of the archive was originally delivered as part of a paper to an international colloquium entitled 'Memory: the Question of Archives' (Derrida 1998). Steedman (2002) observed that 'the archival turn' (an increased interest in the archives in Western culture in the second half of the twentieth century) as suggested by Derrida was well underway by 1994, and that his 'Archive Fever' was less about the archives than an exploration of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic concepts, particularly that related to the nature of memory.[1] She notes that the philosopher Michel Foucault had raised

[1] Freud's metaphor of the *Wunderblock*, the mystic writing pad, is discussed by Derrida in this text, making links between memory and writing (Steedman 2002): in turn, it is suggested that

the question of the archive as early as the 1960's, defining the archive as the system that establishes statements as events and things (Foucault 1969 in Steedman 2002). For Derrida, the archive stands in for the idea of what can and cannot be said (a form or symbol of state power). Thus, several themes are suggested: the relationship between the archive and power (inhering in its historical roots), the archive and knowledge/ truth, and a tangled relationship between the archives, memory and forgetting.

Arguably, these themes subsequently influenced contemporary curators and artists who have engaged with the archive or the making of personal archives from the late 1990s through the first decade of the twenty-first century just ended (Foster 2004; Merewether 2006; Maimon 2008). A new politics of the archive was initiated (Steedman 2002). The fever or sickness referred to by Derrida, as Steedman (2002) suggests, is to do with the establishment of state power as well as the feverish desire—a kind of sickness—for the archive: the desire not so much to enter it as to possess it, for it to be there in the first place. The archive fever—the desire for the archive—is the desire to find or locate or possess the moment of origin or the beginnings of things. Derrida uses Freud's psychoanalytic concept that the compulsion to repeat—to recollect/ re-collect in memory—represents the drive towards death. The desire to make an archive in the first place, then, is to want to repeat; the fever, the sickness of the archive is a form of this death drive (Steedman 2002; Merewether 2006). One other thematic thread is worth highlighting here: the association between an archive and a house or a domestic place of keeping in the earliest roots of the word via the *arkheion* (Velody 1998, Steedman 2002). Indeed, Derrida's 'Archive Fever' was created in a specific context: the family house and extensive object collections of Freud remaining in his former home turned public museum (Derrida 1998).

Contemporary Contingencies

The archive, Spieker (2008) contends, formed a crucible of twentieth century modernism, closely linked to evolving attitudes toward contingent time in both science and art. His consideration of archivally-driven art in relation to changing media technologies over the course of the century, from the typewriter, the telephone, the telegraph and film, connects artistic interest in the archive to emerging interest in modern visuality, whereby the avant garde—Dadists, Constructivist and Surrealists—used the nineteenth century idea of the archive as a laboratory for experimental inquiries into the nature of vision and its relation to

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this forged a powerful metaphor of the archive as the processes of collecting traces of the past and forgetting them.

time. As Enwezor (2007 in Maimon 2008) noted, interest in the critical logic of the archive was also prevalent in postmodern art, and that the concept of the archive in the philosophical work of Michel Foucault (1972), provided the theoretical ground for the postmodern critique of authorship and originality.

The focus at hand, however, is on the contemporary. That there is/was a powerful 'archival impulse' also at play in contemporary visual art was noted by art historian and theorist Foster (2004).[2] Spieker (2008, in Nygard & Sonseteby 2009) points out that within the artistic community, there seems to be little consensus as to what an archive is and how it might be distinguished from other types of artists' collections, and contends that archives do not record experience so much as its absence. Contemporary art curator Merewether (2006) contextualised the ways in which concepts of the archive have been defined, examined, contested and re-invented by artists and cultural observers (curators, critics, theorists) from the early twentieth century to the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first. In what is a form of archive-making itself in the selection and compilation of texts from artist statements (however poetic or obtuse), critical reviews, and theoretical overviews into a print anthology, four main themes of engagement were proposed: Traces, Inscriptions, Contestations and Retracings (Merewether 2006). It is evident that contemporary artists have used, critiqued and reinterpreted existing archives, as well as become archivists themselves—making new archives as alternative or counter-archives or personal collections that reference the archive as a repository of memory and knowledge. The literature is dense, the ways are multiple and the different stresses placed by writers on the art works or art practices arguably reflect their own interests and biases on this topic. Of most interest and relevance to this review are contemporary artists as archive makers.

Artists make their own collections for a plurality of intentions (Foster 2004; Merewether 2006; Gibbons 2007). Foster (2004) has also suggested that archives made by artists as a gesture of alternative knowledge or counter-memory might be described as an anarchival impulse. Counter-archives (and counter-monuments) are collections of that which has been silenced or buried. Here also, practices of artists living in or investigating the histories of contemporary postcolonial nations predominate (Foster 2004). All archives are subjective and partial constructions that raise questions about the adequacy, propriety and truthfulness

[2] Foster also uses the term to differentiate the motivations of contemporary artists (late 1990s and 2000s) from those of the 1970s and 1980s described by art critic and historian Owens (1980) as an 'allegorical impulse'.

of the accumulated materials and objects (Velody 1998). Playful critique of the exactitude—the visual truth—of the photographic trace is one vivid strand of contemporary archive art (Maimon 2008; Hobbs 1998; McGurren 2010; Gibbons 2007; Rizk 2008; Avgikos 2008). The uncertain authority and authenticity of an archive is both critiqued and celebrated by the visual archives-installations of French installation artist Christian Boltanski (Velody 1998; Hobbs 1998; McGurren 2010) and the English artist Tacita Dean (Maimon 2008; Iversen 2010). A conflation of the personal and historical dimensions of the archive is one method by which Boltanski's oeuvre problematises its authority (Hobbs 1998). For example, Boltanski's early works performed rites of loss and recovery: *Search for and Presentation of Everything that remains of my Childhood, 1944–1950* (1969) collected and presented a vast collection of photographs and photographs of objects pertaining to early childhood—an archive of recovered identity. However, 'relics' assembled in this cache included fakes (a new shirt, a recently cut lock of hair) and fake photographs; not of Boltanski at all. This planting of fakes in the archive revealed the potential inauthenticity of not only the personal archive but also the authority/ truth of the photograph, shown to be more icon than document (Hobbs 1998). In Boltanski's more recent installation *Personnes* (2010), no photographs were used. Archival traces of 'pastness' included worn pieces of clothing (analogous to photographs in an album), sampled squares of cloth (almost 'snap shots' of a person) and human heartbeats. A companion project *Archives du Coeur* (2010) invited viewers to make and donate recordings of their heartbeats in a nearby room. For what is an ongoing archival project, these are now stored in a sound library on uninhabited Teshima Island in Japan. These recordings, like photographs, are another re-presentation of a posthumous existence (McGurren 2010), an archive of human transience. In the British artist Tacita Dean's work *Floh* (2000) a framed collection of family photographs were in fact found objects collected from flea markets in Europe and the USA, then enlarged, grouped and framed as art photography. What might be interpreted as personal family history was a constructed fiction using the archive of the photographic trace. While the photograph archives the non-reproducible present, a non-replaceable place (Derrida 2010), fictional narratives of memory and history may be easily created.

Remembering … Forgetting … Re-presenting

The archive, memory and forgetting is a recurring theme explored in a plurality of ways in contemporary archive art (Green 2002 in Merewether 2006; Gibbons 2007; Maimon 2008; Avgikos 2008). Memory as an analysis of forgetting was explicitly linked in the archive-

making book projects of the Provoke and Vivo groups of avant-garde photographers in post-war 1950s Japan (Merewether 2002 in Merewether 2006). In post-nuclear Nagasaki, a place where all pre-existing material archives had been atomised, the place itself became the archive, and the repository of history was in the survivors, remnants and relics of the living that surrounded them. They used the book form as a counter-archival practice with which to document the silence—from media and the state—in the aftermath of the war and the effects of new industrialization. The blast scars on faces and across place became a form of citation, and by repetition—rephotographing for years afterwards—the archive remained in the present, or the present progressing time. The new archive and its meaning was made out of scraps and traces: photographs badly printed, blotched and scarred by chemicals and scratched by lines across its surface, like the place, the faces and bodies (Merewether 2002 in Merewether 2006). As curator of the exhibition 'Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art', Enwezor (2007, in Maimon 2008) argues that the critique of the archive in recent artistic production has shifted from the museum and aesthetic ideas about authenticity and autonomy (which dominated postmodern practices) to concerns about art's relationship to historical reflections of the past, and the active use of historical documents and photographs by artists to negotiate the zone between trauma and public memory. A powerful example of the latter is Hans-Peter Feldmann's wall installation of 117 front pages collected from a range of international newspapers published a day after the destruction of the 2001 World Trade Centre in New York. His new archive selectively assembled and displayed the plurality of interpretations of the same traumatic event by the print media; the affective power of the visual repetition of photographs taken at the time of destruction added to the exposed contingency of these new cultural records (Maimon 2008; Avgikos 2008).

That the archive is not one and the same as forms of remembrance, or as history, is a refrain of consensus in the recent literature across disciplines surveyed here (Derrida 1998; Steedman 2002; Merewether 2006; Gibbons, 2007). Indeed, how traces—the residual marks or index left behind by events or experiences—are perceived and understood is posited as a key theme in the relation between art and the archive (Merewether 2006). Traces are un-covered and re-presented in the mixed-media installation practice of Tasmanian Julie Gough who researches archives of colonial government records, newspaper accounts, images and artefacts from the first European contacts of the 18th century to the present day. As well she has been described as an obsessive collector of other found objects especially those associated with her Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestry: shells, birds, postcards, green

things, kitchen tools, souvenirs from the 1950s, kelp, cuttlefish, sticks of tea-tree and books with the word ‘black’ in the title (Ozolins 2007). These new archives re-presented as installed spaces are concerned with reconfiguring and describing an alternative version of the past that questions the authority and veracity of official recorded history (Ozolins 2007; Boyce et al. 2011). Green (2002 in Merewether 2006) writes of looking for the absences, lacunae, holes in the archives to apprehend what is not said or recorded, and asks what role chance might play in what is remembered and what is archived as memory, both personal and cultural.[3]

Little discussed in the literature have been radical material translations or the transformations of archival content such as paper-based documents and photographic images in the creation of alternative or new types of archives. By this is meant the rendering in a material or format that is radically different to the original. In most of the archive art discussed, photography, installation, re-assemblage formats and film predominate. But there are a small number of examples referred to in the literature on ceramics artists, for instance, who have engaged with archival material or create new archives in various ways. English artist Neil Brownsword collects the shards and remnants of the once-thriving but now almost extinct ceramics industry in Staffordshire by combing abandoned factories and literally digging in his own backyard because many house foundations were built on factory discards (Adamson 2008, Stewart 2010). He sources the material failures found on factory floors, as well as traces of making that he deems carry—a form of absence in the present—the centuries of labour and tacit knowledge now being lost over the last twenty years of factory closures in his home region. These found material traces of a social and creative past, some of which are reworked and refired by Brownsword, are assembled in large scale installations that evoke industrial wastelands (Adamson 2008; Stewart 2010); part archaeological recovery, his practice materially witnesses and records social and creative loss, as well as refusing to forget what is being forgotten. Conceptual links between the physical durability of vitrified clay (as evidenced by the archaeological persistence of clay objects) and archival possibilities have been articulated and used by the present author to

[3] In relation to the archive and memory, resonance is heard here with Ricoeur's (2004) comprehensive work on memory, history and forgetting, in particular the emerging consensus that memory is more easily retained if physically located in a locality or site. ‘Retracing one's steps’ with the mind’s eye is a literal and metaphorical relocating of the cortical trace/s that constitute stored memory.

materially witness and record historical-contemporary species extinctions and local ecological loss. This poetic (serious) approach to 'archiving' transience and loss has taken prominence as a larger exploratory site in most recent practice (Ballard 2009; Jones 2010).[4] Institutional archival collections of documents have also been used by Australian ceramicist Mel Robson who sampled a library heritage collection on local women's history; selected narratives about female labour and the everyday were then printed onto new handcrafted vessel forms, rendering visible and tangible the largely invisible and unpaid daily cycle of domestic work (Ostling 2007).

The Digital and the Ephemeral

Literature (in the conventional forms of publication) is still relatively scant on contemporary artists' engagement with the realm of the digital archive—the vast repositories of data being stored as data files and on the Internet.[5] Greene (2004) canvasses a spectrum of artists engaging with the Internet as sites of innovation and ways in which authorship, originality and intellectual property are resisted and shifted. Paul (2008) surveys developments in digital art since the 1980s, and engages with the emergent issue of the collection and preservation of digital art. New media artist and theorist Lev Manovich's (2001) writing on the 'database' as a form unique to new media was exemplified in his own visual database creation and translation as digital art works: *Mission to Earth (Soft Cinema Edition)* (2003–2004) was a computer-driven media installation using a composed database of video clips; *Timeline* (2009), created with custom software, was a high resolution visualisation of his collection of all 4535 covers of Time magazine from 1923 to 2009 (Manovich n.d.; Manovich & Douglass 2009*).* Ursula Biemann's video essay *Black Oil Pipes* (2005) spanned a two-year project to witness, explore and document the construction phase of the giant subterranean Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline across the Caucasus to provide crude oil to Western Europe. Following the trajectory of the pipeline destined to become invisible when buried underground, Biemann engaged with oil workers, farmers and sex workers, rendering visible their lives of transience, impact and change. The video essay was presented and articulated as ten 'files'—a data-media archive of situated investigation and artistic witness of the political ecology of the oil 'resource' (Biemann

[4] For example, large ceramic forms engraved with the list of extinct and threatened Australian fauna over the past 227 years of British colonisation as part of a ceramic archiving project begun in 2005, updated over time, and imagined as instalments of an austral time capsule of witness in long-lived (if frangible) materiality (Ballard 2009; Boscacci 2008, 2010).

[5] At the time of this literature review (2011). See the *Afterword* at the end of the review.

n.d.; Dimitrakaki 2007). Although Manovich and Biemann do not directly articulate their work in the language of the archive or archives, creating digital databases for artistic use, and adopting the language of ‘files’ to title the video essay as an art document, can also be viewed as manifestations of the archival impulse using digital forms or virtual objects.

Featherstone (2006) notes that the digital archive moves the concept of the archive as a physical place that stores records to that of the archive as a virtual site facilitating immediate transfer and movement of data. As such, it provides a fluid and dynamic archival space in which the topology of documents can be reconfigured again and again; paradoxically, the decentred digital archive appears to cut through many of the themes found in contemporary art critiques of the archive discussed above. Surveying the creative potential of the interdisciplinary digital archive, Arthur (2008) notes the emerging democratisation of historical narrative making, particularly via experimental ‘mashups’—websites that combine content from several different sources (photographs, accounts and testimonies, maps) which can be reconfigured into an integrated experience at any point in time by an interactive participant. In relation to the contemporary art field, Gibbons (2007) refers to the potential for a new memory culture—which might be called emergent memory—created by webs of multi-linear and serendipitous interconnections of data. Of relevance to the archive, she asserts that digital technologies offer reminders of the fluidity and instability of memory, and that although predicated on the past, memory is always constructed in the present. It is worth noting, however, that Gibbons' (2007) concluding thoughts on contemporary art and memory, including the archival practices, focus on forgetting as a fruitful space for new aesthetic inquiry; an echo of Huyssen's (1995) allusion to a culture of amnesia and the temporal space of twilight as a metaphor for the fleeting, yet marvellous zone between remembering and forgetting.

In the peripheral vision of the literature on the archives and the contemporary visual arts lies the medium—the materials of its making. Whilst memory surfaces repeatedly in artists’ concerns, alongside the contingent veracity of the trace, overwhelmingly the carriers of the new archives made by artists are transitory or ephemeral—whether photograph, text on paper, film, and even the virtual data file. To the extent that this is part of aesthetic intent—the archive returns to dust and forgetting allows new remembrance—is unclear in many cases; Boltanski is one artist who is now *explicitly* creating new archives of the ephemeral with his collected recordings of human heartbeats destined for long-term storage in a bespoke sound library. It is curious that contemporary conversation with the age of the Greek archons who housed the earliest archives (by definition) in their domestic milieu is

most commonly conducted through the archaeological remnants of fired clay objects. Even the shards of pots (*ostraca*) once reused like scraps of paper to inscribe everyday notes and ballot votes still carry these traces of the prosaic and the poetic into the present day via museum object collections. The long-term material memory of vitrified clay is by its physical nature a long-term archiver of the everyday and the hyper-local in a wider cultural worlding. I suggest that this largely overlooked material archive can open a new contingent space for original artistic contributions to the topic of both the archives and memory/ remembering and forgetting. Embracing the long-term materiality of clay, glass or inscribed stone objects as accidental historical archives to provoke new contemporary projects of embodied witness—for making idiosyncratic future archives intended for future encounter—returns the archive to its makers, making tangible and corpo-real the resilient archival (and anarchival) impulse in the midst of what is increasingly becoming a vast collective project of ephemerality. Indeed, a refrain heard in the course of researching the literature on the topic of the archive was the contemporary preoccupation with memory in Western culture, particularly with a possible new age of forgetting as global digital connectivity promotes an unprecedented externalisation of personal witness and social memory into the virtual memory spaces of the Internet.

Afterword

This review was undertaken and written in 2011 in the early stages of the research project. I want to note two spheres of contemporary art and the archive that have bloomed since then. Firstly, the creation of online multimedia platforms as open-access, interdisciplinary archives which offer a fluid methodology for interlinking layers and temporalities of creative documents such as mapped visualisations, exhibitions, video essays, historical research, and journal publications. A prominent example is the 'World of Matter' collective of artists and scholars who launched an eponymous multimedia platform in 2013 to archive and connect different files, actors, territories and ideas in a vast collaborative project on the global ecologies of resources exploitation and circulation (World of Matter 2013).

Second, the creation of new feminist archives as projects of historical recovery and contemporary art generation. The Australian project 'Future Feminist Archive' (FFA) was launched in 2015 as a year-long project across New South Wales to mark the 40th Anniversary of International Women's Year. The project brought together artists, archivists, filmmakers, curators and art historians to discuss ways to recover lost feminist archives and to imagine the new. Artists and researchers were invited to engage with and speculate about feminist histories in archives and collections to create exhibitions, workshops, performances and publishing outcomes. Exhibitions hosted engagements with the archive in a variety of ways: using official records and neglected artefacts, creating alternative documents, and materially manifesting the intergenerational passing on of memories. Hidden or neglected information and new knowledge about artists and their communities will ultimately create over two hundred new entries in Design and Art Australia Online (DAAO). The project also collated and linked the 'Future Feminist Archive' to an international list of other creative/ collaborative archives of visual art (The Cross Arts Projects 2015; Sydney College of the Arts 2015).

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Appendix E

The Solar Trunk

As part of the studio investigation into light and lighting options for new works, a portable solar capture and energy unit was developed. See Figure E.1 below. This comprised: a portable, folding solar panel, a 12 volt (75 Ah) storage battery, and an electrical inverter (12V to 24V) to provide electricity via a multi-point power board to components such as LED paneled *lightenings* and a digital photo frame. The charged battery, inverter and power surge board were fitted into a found vintage metal travel trunk. This vintage metal travel trunk became an exhibition object, both allusive of historic voyage and storage, and repurposed to be functionally energetic. The Solar Trunk was a successful and flexible innovation for exhibition use (Chapter Four) and public presentation use beyond gallery walls (Chapter Six).

Figure E.1. The Solar Trunk

Individual components laid out in images 1 and 2 (over) are packed into the open trunk (3) to become invisible in the closed trunk (4), over. The folding solar capture panel travels in a separate carrier sleeve. The vintage metal travel trunk (59 x 38 x 36 cm) provided a portable energy source as an exhibition ensemblage object.

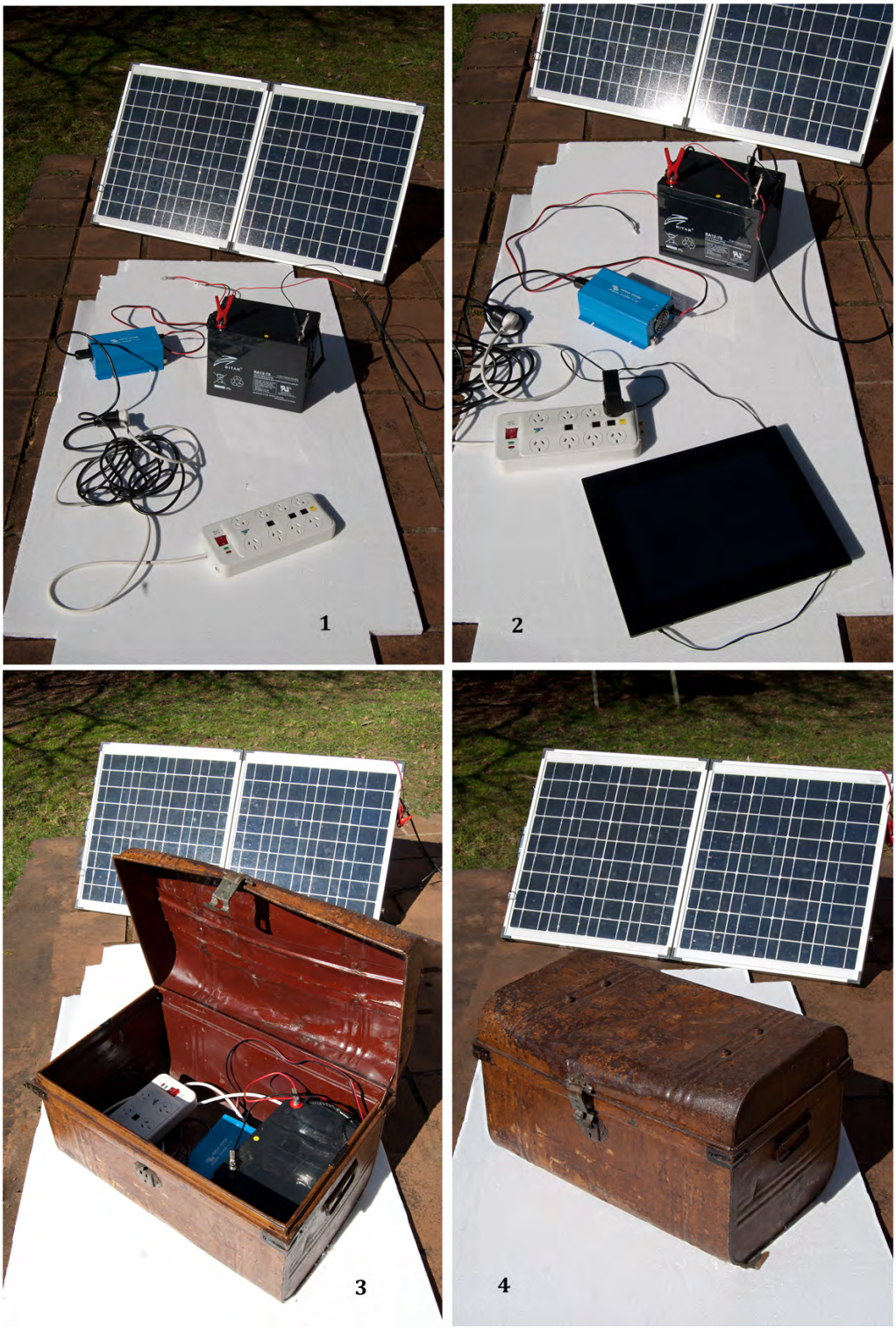

Figure E.2. The Solar Trunk, unpacked.

(Refer to the description on the previous page).